

Wild

AUSTRALIA'S WILDERNESS ADVENTURE MAGAZINE



Gear surveys:

tents for bushwalking,

headlamps

Survey of conservation

organizations

Trekking in Nepal

Bushwalking:

Great North Walk

Snowy Bluff

Snow camping advice

Plus canoeing,

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AUSTRALIA'S WILDERNESS ADVENTURE MAGAZINE

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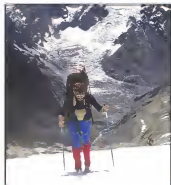
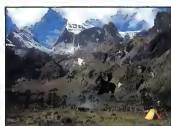
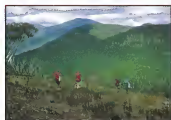
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Cover Tracey Johnston and Janis Feldgen enjoying the scenery and the sunshine on Victoria's Bogong High Plains (Mt Feathertop behind). Photo Stephen Hamilton

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WILD JAN/FEB/MAR 1991 1

Paddy Pallin



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The Freedom of the Hills

What freedom, what hills?

▲ ACCORDING TO THE INNOCUOUS-LOOKING notice taped to the wall of a university sports centre, the extensions and renovations are being undertaken not just to improve the facilities for students and members. No, sir! The main purpose in expending of hundreds of thousands of dollars of taxpayers' money on more than doubling the weight-room facilities appears to be to make them safer and, more to the point, to reduce the chance of successful litigation against the university in the event of accident. But that is not all. The notice goes on to describe how sports centre bureaucrats are pursuing the possibility of (have decided on?) introducing a compulsory system of education, assessment and accreditation for all prospective users of the facilities, provided at the expense of participants.

'Litanoia'-suffering bureaucrats, they run in terror lest a plague of legal actions might decimate the pockets and credibility of those responsible for the administration of anything more risky than tiddly-wink tables. They go for the quick fix of rule- and restrictions everywhere, in the name of that holy of holies, 'safety'. It begins with a call for the accreditation of, first, instructors, and of all participants in the activity concerned soon after.

Of the rucksack sports, these bureaucrats now have rockclimbing in their sights, with plans to legislate away the not inconsiderable potential for danger with a whole series of rules and regulations, including accreditation of instructors. In the wake of a succession of fatal accidents in Victoria, the demands for more 'control' are becoming louder and more insistent. (In no case does it seem likely that the accidents would have been avoided had accreditation existed at the time.) Another proposal is to ban the activity from areas deemed 'dangerous', such as at Lal Lal Falls, Hanging Rock and the north side of Werribee Gorge in Victoria, and North Head and the Breadknife in New South Wales, to name a few.

The other rucksack sports including bushwalking and, particularly, ski touring could quickly follow climbing were the bureaucrats to receive sufficient encouragement for their endeavours in that field. A strong and concerted response from all rucksack sports enthusiasts, not just climbers, is needed to stop people from legislating the danger, spice and freedom—which are part of the attraction of such activities—out of pursuits about which they know little and understand even less, and from controlling their 'arena'—our bush, mountains and other wild places. Their motto seems to be: 'It's easier to legislate than to educate'. Unless we can convince them otherwise, excessive regulations will flow into every aspect of physical activity—and possibly other activity as well.

The *raison d'être* of rucksack sports is at risk at a time when the systematic destruction of



Above. Chris at the end of a long day on Scafell Pike (background), Lake District, England.

our wild environment is a serious (and more widely recognized) threat as well.

Any remaining illusions about the sincerity of politicians in their support for conservation of wilderness and their loyalty to the Green vote have been well and truly washed away following decisions taken recently by the Federal, Victorian and Tasmanian Governments. Formerly 'conservationists' allies, these three governments now propose to sell out our heritage in Kakadu, East Gippsland and South-west Tasmania.

This intended destruction of wilderness for short-term economic gain is exacerbated by increasingly vigorous bureaucratic attempts to market it as a tourist destination for a general public unwilling to leave urban amenities behind, and to tame it and make it 'safe' so that administrators won't be sued for their efforts.

Wilderness has reached a crisis point. First to lose will be Wild readers and other rucksack sports enthusiasts, closely followed by the community at large as greenhouses and other once futuristic predictions become reality. Governments and their bureaucrats need to be told that enough is enough. Let's hope they listen before it is too late to save our wilderness. ▲

Chris Baxter
 Chris Baxter
 Managing Editor

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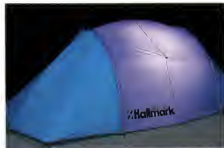
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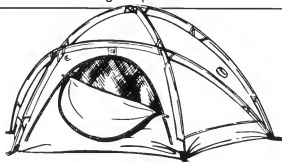
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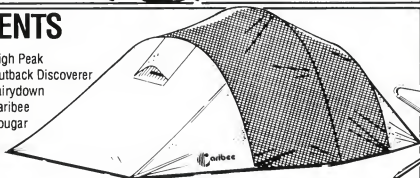
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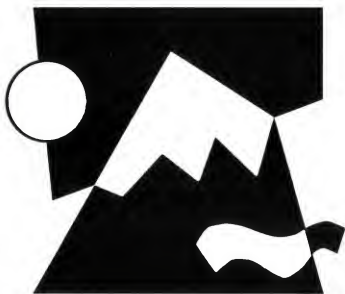
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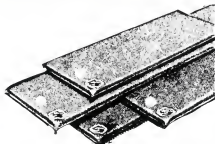
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Success on the Savage Mountain

Child and Mortimer climb K2 by the North Ridge

First Australian Ascents. Three more of the world's 14 peaks of altitudes above 8,000 metres have this year been climbed by Australians for the first time. Information, *Wild* no 38, carried the news of Michael Groom's success on Cho Oyu (8,153 metres). It was reported in *Mountain* no 134 that several members of an international expedition—among them Australian climber Mark Lemaire, New Zealander Russell Brice, and well-known climbing-equipment manufacturer Mark Vallance, of the UK—had reached the summit of Shisha Pangma (8,013 metres), in western China. They climbed the mountain by the original route and reached the top on 26 May.

Then, on 20 August, Greg Child and Greg Mortimer, accompanied by Steve Swenson (USA), became the first Australians to set foot on the summit of K2 (8,611 metres), the second-highest mountain in the world. After a difficult approach through China and six weeks of preparation on the mountain, they climbed its North Ridge in a push lasting six days (four days up, two down) from advanced base camp. The ascent was made without artificial oxygen.

The three reached the top at around 8 pm in deteriorating weather and then returned to their high camp at an altitude of 7,940 metres; much of this descent was made in the dark. A fourth climber, Phil Ershler, had earlier turned back from a point about 300 metres below the summit. Child, Swenson and Ershler had reached 7,100 metres on the South Face of K2 in 1987 before being repulsed by bad weather and unfavourable snow conditions. This was Mortimer's first attempt. The climbing team was supported as far as advanced base camp by three more Australians—Lyle Closs, Dr Peter Keustner and Margaret Werner—and four Pakistani porters.

K2 is a notoriously difficult and dangerous mountain, and had not been climbed since 1986—a season, well documented in print and on film, during which 13 climbers of various nationalities lost their lives in attempts. The North Ridge had been climbed only twice before, and this ascent is a great personal achievement for the climbers and their small supporting party. It is perhaps the most exciting step forward for Australian mountaineering in a year which has seen many, particularly on 8,000 metre peaks.

Tiger on Snow Shoes. We are sure many readers continue to be astonished, as we are, by the number and variety of Peter Treseder's achievements in Australia's wild places and by the skill they demonstrate. It is inevitable that in reporting any such feat in a brief paragraph, the thoroughness of the preparation that must



Above, Ayers Rock, Northern Territory—off limits to professional photographers? David Tatnall

precede it is ignored, and the competence with which it is carried off is glossed over. There is also the risk of missing an important point: Treseder's exploits warrant comparison with Olympic marathons and ascents of Himalayan peaks, yet they take place in an arena which is familiar to many of us and accessible to almost everyone.

Last August, Treseder completed the first snow-shoe traverse of the Australian Alps. It was one of few solo winter traverses of the Alps to date, and certainly the fastest. He covered the 600 kilometres between the abandoned Honeysuckle Creek tracking station in the Australian Capital Territory and Walhalla, Victoria, in eight days. Apart from a few modifications, the route taken was that described in John Siseman's book *The Alpine Walking Track, Walhalla to Canberra*.

Out of Focus. Recent issues of the magazine *Professional Photography in Australia* have

carried an exchange of views on a matter of importance to photographers and those who publish photographs on the one hand, and on the other to those who wish to see Australian Aboriginal culture remain viable. Well-known landscape photographer Peter Jarver wrote to express his concern at regulations in place in Uluru National Park which threaten the freedom of professional photographers, but not amateurs, to photograph the Olgas and parts of Ayers Rock. Other photographers and the magazine's editorial staff gave him considerable support.

In a reply published in a subsequent issue, the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service pointed out that since 1985, Uluru has been leased from Aboriginal owners and managed by a board containing a majority of Aboriginal people. The park serves 'not only to protect the unique natural features of the area, but also to maintain the traditions and culture of the Aboriginal traditional owners'. The board's guidelines for filming and photography, the article said, are designed to protect Aboriginal people from accidental

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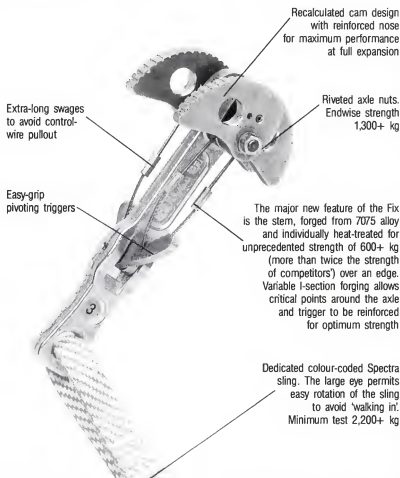
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exposure to pictures of places which, according to traditional law, they are not allowed to see. Photographers are similarly asked in other parts of the world to respect cultural and religious sensitivities by not taking photographs in certain places.

The NPWS argument is persuasive, but the opinion of professional photographers that they are being unfairly discriminated against is hard to refute. *Wild*, for example, is widely distributed and read, yet many of the photographs in its pages are taken by people who are essentially amateurs. If restrictions are to be imposed, perhaps they should apply to all, not only to those whose photographs provide their livelihood.

Corrections and Amplifications. The references to 'Giant Staircase' in the Kanangra-Boyd National Park Track Notes on pages 69 and 71 of *Wild* no 37 should read 'Golden Stairs'.

Gerard Veitch was incorrectly referred to as 'Garry Veitch' on page 52 of *Wild* no 38.

There are some errors in the *Wild* Equipment Survey of helmets for canoeing and rafting on page 77 of *Wild* no 38. All Ace helmets have an inner cage, whereas Wildwater and Action helmets do not. On the Wildwater helmet first listed, ear protection is standard, not optional. All helmets in the survey are made of plastic (since nylon, polypropylene, polycarbonate and fibreglass are all plastics). A distinction was made between plastic and nylon to convey the look and feel of each helmet. Both Wildwater helmets are made of polypropylene.

NEW SOUTH WALES

'Paddy' Cut Short. The 26th Paddy Pallin Cross Country Classic ski race, held at Perisher on 4 August, was shortened—while in progress—from 46 to 25 kilometres. The change was made an hour into the race, after falling snow and strong winds had reduced visibility to five metres on parts of the course. Vlad Skop won the abbreviated race by just one second from Mike Edmondson, who had missed the start by ten minutes after being caught in a traffic jam. Tim Gates was third. Fiona Rae was the only woman to finish the modified course.

The official 25 kilometre race went ahead separately as planned, and was won by Anthony Evans from Tom Landon-Smith and David Lee. The first woman to finish was Cheryl Power, more than nine minutes ahead of Rachel Story. Deb Godsmark was a further five minutes away in third place. The two races were completed by a total of 297 skiers, a number probably kept down by the poor weather.

Licence to Rescue. The Rock Squad, part of the search and rescue organization of the NSW Federation of Bushwalkers, has recently achieved accreditation for cliff rescue under a system administered by the Australian Lightweight Vertical Rescue Instructors Incorporated. This independent body sets and maintains standards for many organizations throughout Australia. The ten members of the squad, seven from Sydney and three from Canberra, had theoretical and practical

training for ten weekends before sitting a three-hour examination. The squad claims that, if you get into trouble on a cliff, its members can get you out of it.

Beth Tresseder



Above, the Rock Squad practising in the Blue Mountains, New South Wales. Peter Tresseder collection

VICTORIA

Nameless Knoll. A letter (forwarded to us by *Wild* reader Phillip Barnes, of Porepunkah) appears to settle the question of naming a knoll on the Spion Koppe spur which, it has been argued, is the third-highest point in Victoria and hence deserves a name (see Information, *Wild* nos 22 and 34, and *Wildfire*, *Wild* no 35). The letter, from the Secretary of the State Government's Place Names Committee, announces that there will be no official naming, on the grounds that 'the feature is a knoll and not a mountain (and) the committee has deemed that it is inappropriate to name these types of features'. In addition, the letter says, to name the feature Mt Brookes, after walker Stuart Brookes, would contravene the guidelines of the committee: features are not named after persons still living.

Phillip Barnes had made a detailed submission to the committee, in which he distinguished between peaks and high tops, and called for restraint in the assigning of names to the latter. He argued, among other things, that there are six localized points on Mt Bogong alone which in height exceed the point in question without being regarded as separate mountains, and ten high tops in the vicinity of Mt Nelse, only two of which have names.

With due respect to Stuart Brookes, and to the three walkers whose battle with cancer gave rise to the earlier proposal to name the point Mt Steadfast, it seems the time has come to lay the matter to rest.

Wilderness Watch. In Gippsland, a trial of a scheme which may bring the methods of the

Neighbourhood Watch programme to the Victorian bush is under way. Bush Alert is administered by the Victoria Police and the Department of Conservation and Environment, and aims to encourage people to report 'suspicious criminal activities and vandalism' on public land to the police. A form is available which lists common offences to look out for—these range from the cultivation of illegal crops to the deliberate damaging of flora by off-road driving and trail bikes—and includes a detachable 'suspicious activities report form'.

Dress: Neat Polarplus. The Victorian Outdoor Education Association will host the seventh National Outdoor Education Conference on 21–24 January 1991 at the Chisholm campus of Monash University, in Frankston. Organizers hope that the conference will foster the exchange of ideas and the formation of links between those who use the outdoors for educational and training purposes anywhere in Australia. Many are expected to participate, and interest has already been expressed by prospective speakers and participants from Australia and overseas. For further information contact the VEOA, PO Box 1896R, Melbourne, Vic 3001, or phone the Outdoor Recreation Centre—(03) 457 5432.

Winter Classic. Winners of the 1990 Subaru–Peregrine Winter Classic, contested over the last weekend in July between Dinner Plain and Omeo in north-east Victoria, were Tim Gates and Rod Hislop, of Sydney, ahead of New Zealanders Russell Prince and Steve Gurney.

Map Meet. The Australian Map Industry Association held its first conference on 29 and 30 October in Melbourne.

TASMANIA

New Challenge. The inaugural Tasmanian Winter Challenge, held on 16 September in Mt Field National Park, attracted 67 competitors. Seven attempted the 62 kilometre course alone, the remainder in relay teams of four members.

The event began at a height of more than 1,260 metres with a ten kilometre leg on cross country skis, which unseasonably warm weather reduced to a run for many competitors. This was followed by 13.5 kilometres of running, down a punishing gravel road and through beautiful old-growth forest to the banks of the Tyenna River. Here, a crowd of spectators cheered competitors as they exchanged their running shoes for kayaks and began a nine kilometre white-water descent. Despite the low water level, most found this quite challenging. Competitors with strong canoeing ability were able to gain time on the specialist runners, who had set the pace down the mountain. The final leg was a 30 kilometre cycle to the town of New Norfolk.

All involved pronounced the event a huge success. The Diehards relay team won the event in 3 hours 24 minutes, a clear 24 minutes ahead of the elegantly dressed Licorice Allsorts. The first women home were

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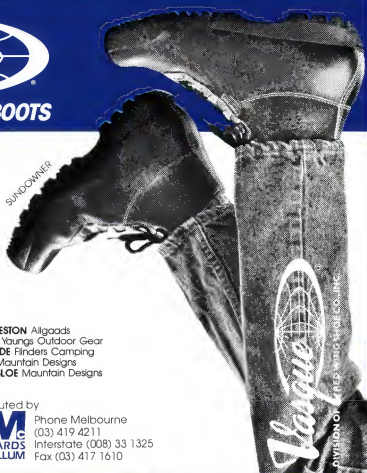
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Wild Information

the Stringy Bark Sisters, in 4 hours 25 minutes. Fastest individual was Andrew Pitt, who finished in 3 hours 56 minutes. Chris Eastman made up nearly 15 minutes on the river after breaking a ski binding earlier in the race, and came second. The Winter Challenge will be repeated next year over the same course.

Jill How and Jonathan Males



Above: Peter Hendley, of the Not So Stringy Bark Brothers team, hard at it in the inaugural Tasmanian Winter Challenge. John McLaine

Ecology Courses. For the third year, the Tasmanian Environment Centre is running a series of courses which visit natural habitats and plant communities and study their ecology and what influences it. Bookings for the fifth course, in Mt Field National Park on 12–18 January 1991, closed on 10 December; and for the last two, on the Central Plateau and in Ben Lomond National Park in February, on 14 January. Contact the TEC, 102 Bathurst St, Hobart, Tas 7000, for details, or for copies of the *Organic Growing Calendar* for 1991 (\$7.00 including postage).

OVERSEAS

Under Mexico. Australian cavers, members of the Santa Ana '90 Expedition, spent an average of two months in Mexico last January and February. The main activity of the expedition took place in the Santa Ana Ateitlahuaca area of Oaxaca State. The largest cave explored was Xongo Dwi Ni, which was pushed to a depth of .443 metres. Some six and a half kilometres of cave were surveyed, but apparently there is potential for much more exploration.

In the Zongolica area, two caves were pushed deeper: Nia Quien Nita (Dead Dog Cave) to .750 metres, and X'oy Tixa (Man Hole) to .813 metres.

However, it is reported that Al Warild was badly injured by rockfall in one of the caves and was repatriated to Australia for several operations, from which he is recovering slowly.

Photo Tip. The 15th annual Banff Festival of Mountain Films, held on 2–4 November in Banff, Canada, for the first time incorporated a competition for still photography. An annual award for outstanding contributions to the mountain world and to film-making went to Canadian mountain cameraman Pat Morrow. Many mountain photographers could learn from his pithy motto: 'f-8 and be there'.

Readers' contributions to this department, including colour slides, are welcome. Typed items of less than 200 words are more likely to be printed. Send to the Editor, Wild, PO Box 415, Prahran, Victoria 3181.

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The Axeman Cometh

Confrontations loom after forest decisions

Losing Ground. Protests will almost certainly take place in the National Estate forests of eastern Australia again this summer after the allocation of large areas for timber production in at least four States. Indeed, as an item below indicates, non-violent protests have already disrupted logging activities on Queensland's Fraser Island. The end of the Labor-Green parliamentary accord in Tasmania was made inevitable when the Field Government adopted a forest industry strategy which breached the provisions of the accord on woodchip export quotas. In Victoria, the relationship between the conservation movement and the Labor Government is strained after the announcement of a new logging plan for East Gippsland; and in New South Wales, scientists and environment groups have criticized the report of the Joint Scientific Committee on the biology of the south-east forests, on which important decisions made by Federal and State Governments have been based. In the latter two States there has been criticism of the narrow range of opinion consulted in preparing plans for the management of an irreplaceable resource.



Above, now you see it...; National Estate forest at Brown Mountain, East Gippsland, Victoria, December 1989. **Right,** ...now you don't; nine months later, after logging. David Taitnall



each year in East Gippsland. Of that region's 80,000 hectares or so of unprotected National Estate forests, 74,000 hectares have been allocated to the timber industry. Three areas—a total of 6,800 hectares—will become National Parks.

There have been calls for a review of the Joint Scientific Committee's report on the National Estate forests at Coolangubra, Tantawangalo and Yowaka in south-eastern NSW; several individual scientists have reached conclusions, supported by at least four other independent studies, that conflict with its findings. The committee recommended the establishment of narrow, elongated reserves. Many scientists believe that this would lead almost certainly to extinction for a significant number of animal species, including the long-footed potoroo; they favour instead large new National Parks with the disputed forests at their core.

Conservationists opposed the composition of the JSC from the time of its formation. Three of its six members were NSW Forestry Commission employees, and two others were specialists in timber production. As well, it has been claimed that the recent decisions pre-empt the findings of the Victorian Land Conservation Council's Special Investigation into wilderness, the Resource Assessment Commission inquiry into forests, and nine committees established by the Federal Government to investigate ecologically sustainable development.

Government by Committee. Many decisions of the gravest importance to the future of Australia's wild places are reached by committees or commissions set up by either a State or the Federal Government. The major conservation groups who are often invited to send representatives to sit on these committees or to set a case before them face a difficult choice. Whilst it is important that such organizations should contribute to debate, and should be seen to do so, participation in committees ties up resources they can often ill afford in a process fraught with compromise.

On at least three occasions in recent months, the Wilderness Society has chosen to absent itself from the official decision-making process. Its departure from the Fraser Island Fitzgerald Inquiry is recorded in a later item. In October the society decided it could better contribute to the debate on ecologically sustainable development by concentrating on 'community-based work' than by sitting on 'unrepresentative committees...locked into fighting for the middle ground'.

The reasons for the society's decision not to participate in the workings of the RAC are outlined in an article in the September issue of *Wilderness News*. Briefly, the article disputes the idea that wilderness is a resource 'that can be valued in terms of dollars and then that value...compared with the price of development'. It questions the equity of the inquiry process, which pits conservation

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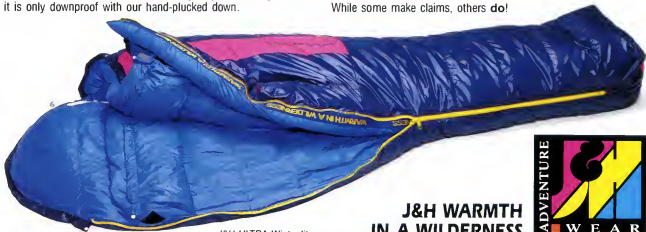
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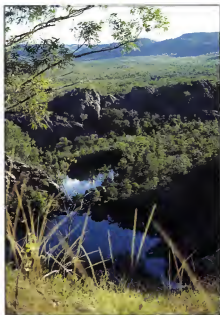
organizations with limited financial resources against the proponents of development—large corporations and industry bodies, prepared to spend huge sums to protect their perceived interests. The society has decided to go its own way, and to push for the protection of Kakadu and the forests—at present the subjects of the RAC's deliberations—on its own terms. According to *Conservation News*, August 1990, the Australian Conservation Foundation shares many of the society's concerns but has chosen to work within the system, having concluded that, as a forum for examining 'the integration of environmental and economic concerns...RAC may well be as good as any other'.

The Old Possums' Network. As destruction and degradation of the natural environment continue, the danger of extinction for many plant and animal species becomes more pressing. Federal Minister for the Environment Ros Kelly recently launched the National Threatened Species Networks, formed by the major conservation groups in each State and in the Northern Territory. Their aim is to promote the conservation of threatened species and crucial habitats by distributing information, participating in campaigns and monitoring the implementation of conservation strategies, among other things. There is a co-ordinator in each capital city with the exception of Canberra; national co-ordinator is Michael Kennedy of the World Wide Fund For Nature, GPO Box 528, Sydney, NSW 2001—phone (02) 261 5572.

NORTHERN TERRITORY

Too Precious. An article reproduced in part in the October issue of the Environment Centre NT's newsletter makes the point that the Coronation Hill lease, in the so-called Conservation Zone excised from Stage Three of Kakadu National Park, is not the only potential mine site to threaten the wetlands of Kakadu. Proposed mines at Jablukka, Koongarra and elsewhere in northern Kakadu lie on or near flood plains, and their development would carry a threat to the surrounding ecology similar to that posed by Coronation Hill, and already experienced on the Fly River in Papua New Guinea as a consequence of gold mining at Ok Tedi. The findings of the Resource Assessment Commission inquiry into the future of the Conservation Zone are expected by April 1991. The article expressed concern that a recommendation in favour of mining might provide the impetus for other projects in the region to proceed. Meanwhile, major conservation groups have made it clear that they do not intend to abandon this issue.

Among those to attend the recent annual general meeting in Melbourne of mining giant, BHP (the leader of the Coronation Hill joint venture), were members of the Wilderness Society's Wilderness Action Group in the guise of hooded parrots, pig-nosed turtles and other animals whose habitat would be threatened by mining in Kakadu. The South Alligator valley, which contains the Conservation Zone, has been identified by the CSIRO as an important animal refuge and a corridor for the movement of many species of fauna.



Above, ranges around Coronation Hill, Kakadu Conservation Zone, from a nearby gorge. This area has been excised from Stage Three of Kakadu National Park to allow mineral exploration in the region. Jamie Pittock

QUEENSLAND

Log Jam. Logging operations in old-growth forests on Fraser Island came to a temporary halt after protesters moved into the forests and blocked logging roads. The action was organized by the Brisbane Rainforest Action Group, its numbers boosted by members of the Wilderness Society. The society's representatives had walked out of the Fraser Island Fitzgerald Inquiry to protest the unfairness of allowing logging to continue while the inquiry proceeded.

According to reports, the 1,300 hectares of forest in question amount to only a few years' supply to Fraser Island's small timber industry. It is Queensland Labor Party policy to declare all Crown land on the island a National Park and nominate it for inclusion on the World Heritage List.

Green Fellowships. Seventy-five years ago, two people—one of them a logger—persuaded the Queensland Government to declare 19,000 hectares of rain forest on the Queensland-New South Wales border a National Park. Lamington was the State's second National Park, and contains what is now the largest area of sub-tropical rain forest still standing in Australia. It is one of Australia's best-known National Parks.

To honour those people and their ideals, the Lamington National Park 75th Anniversary Churchill Fellowship is to be established. A trust to be set up by Tony Groom—son of the founder of Binna Burra Lodge, Arthur Groom—will finance the award, to be made every four years, of an overseas tour to study National Parks, nature conservation and the environment.

To help raise the money required, David Farnworth, an environmental educator from the Lamington Natural History Association, set

off on 10 November from Auckland on board the research vessel *Pelagic*, bound for Punta Arenas, Chile. On arrival in Chile in mid-December, Farnworth will leave the yacht (whose crew will then proceed to Antarctica for three months of research and adventure) and travel to southern Chile's magnificent forests of Antarctic beech and giant moss. These ancient species are identical to others found in Lamington National Park, and date back to the time of Gondwanaland, when Australia, South America and Antarctica were a single land mass.

Farnworth will then travel further north and inspect tropical rain forests. He will write newspaper and magazine articles and conduct live radio interviews from South America, highlighting that the most serious depletion of tropical rain forests is occurring in South-east Asian countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Irian Jaya and the Philippines, and their plight needs to be made known.

A series of lectures which will inform people of the state of rain forests abroad and in Australia is planned for Farnworth's return. Donations in support of the Lamington National Park Churchill Fellowship are tax deductible, and can be sent to the LNHA, c/- Binna Burra Lodge, Beechmont via Nerang, Qld 4211.

(The Lamington Fellowship is one of four special Churchill Fellowships available for 1992. The others are sponsored by: Amcor, for the study of paper recycling in Europe and North America; the Royal Australian Institute of Parks and Recreation, for the study of a subject directly related to parks and recreation in Australia; and the Swire Group, to study woody-weed management applicable to Australia. For forms and full details, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope at least 24 x 12 centimetres in size to Application Forms, The Winston Churchill Memorial Trust, 218 Northbourne Ave, Braddon ACT 2601.)

NEW SOUTH WALES

Wilderness Threats. Several wilderness areas are threatened by actions of the NSW Government. The government has already rejected National Parks and Wildlife Service recommendations for protection of the Coolangubra and North Wapool wilderness areas, and will permit logging there. Minister for the Environment Tim Moore has refused to make the service's wilderness assessments public on the grounds that they are Cabinet documents.

In what is viewed by many conservationists as a campaign of wilderness destruction, the Forestry Commission also proposes logging operations in the Guy Fawkes, Werrikimbe and Deua wilderness areas.

Wilderness conservation groups will attempt to thwart the commission's plans. Much emphasis will be placed on the Coolangubra wilderness in south-eastern NSW. The Federal-State agreement on logging in the south-east forests, including Coolangubra, is seen as a sell-out to the timber industry.

The North-East Forest Alliance has taken legal action against Forestry Commission proposals to log the northern part of the Wapool wilderness. These operations



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would include the removal of rain forest timber from forests floristically different from those now protected in Washpool National Park.

Wilderness groups on the northern tablelands of NSW are particularly concerned at threats to the Guy Fawkes wilderness. In addition to logging proposals, the area is also threatened by mining, freeholding of leasehold land, grazing and horse-riding. Only a fraction of the wilderness area is within Guy Fawkes National Park.

Roger Lembit

No New Parks. NSW is experiencing a National Park drought of record proportions. No new National Parks have been created since the State election in early 1988. This is the longest period without a new park since the establishment of the National Parks and Wildlife Service in 1967.

In addition, experienced and committed staff are leaving the NPWS in droves. With the government's emphasis on commercial management, rumours are spreading that in future, rangers will be required to have an additional qualification—a Master's degree in Business Administration!

RL

Kowmung Flooding. Bushwalkers believe that Water Board engineers are attempting to create a climate of fear among residents of western Sydney to prepare the way for a pet project—a new Warragamba Dam. According to recent press reports, thousands of homes in western Sydney could be destroyed if a large flood were to overtop the existing dam.

The proposed new dam would be 30 metres higher than the existing one, and would flood the lower Kowmung Gorge up to Ritson Elbow, below Karl Mountain, and Cocks River upstream towards the Kanangra Creek junction. The traditional Three Peaks route, which takes in White Dog Ridge and Gentles Pass, would be blocked to those without L-Los.

Several government ministers are reported to be concerned about the environmental implications of the proposed dam, as well as its cost.

RL

Snowy Authority Goes Green. In an effort to convince the public that it is concerned about the environment, the Snowy Mountains Hydro-electric Authority (SMHA) has released a statement on its environmental position.

The statement provides some interesting insights for Victorians concerned about alpine grazing. It says that the results of alpine grazing in the Mt Kosciuszko area were soil erosion, fouled drinking water, fly infestations and the scarring of the landscape.

Regrettably, as the SMHA is a Federal body, it is not subject to NSW law. Thus it only complies with the plan of management for Kosciuszko National Park 'as far as possible'.

The statement shows its knowledge of wilderness recreation by referring to 'backpackers' rather than bushwalkers. No mention is made of wilderness, although the Snowy Mountains scheme resulted in the destruction of significant tracts of wilderness. The SMHA continues to have an impact on wilderness values through the maintenance of

transmission lines, roads and its ugly huts—an example is the upgrading of the Dargals Fire Track in the Jagungal wilderness. According to conservationists, the SMHA carried out this work without approval from the NPWS.

Conservationists believe that the SMHA should work with the service to restore wilderness areas damaged by the Snowy scheme. This restoration work should include the removal of its huts from wilderness areas, rehabilitation of roads and the removal of some transmission lines.

RL

Get Your Skates On. The NPWS has released a discussion paper, entitled *Ski 2000*, in which is stated government policy about development of the State's ski industry. The paper includes analysis of the results of a recent investigation into potential skier capacity at resorts in the Mt Kosciuszko region, and of market research into the local ski industry; and consideration of the capacity of the alpine environment to absorb projected growth. Readers who wish to submit comments on the paper will have to move quickly: closing date is 21 December. For copies of *Ski 2000* contact the Resort Planner, Kosciuszko National Park Headquarters, Sawpit Creek—(064) 56 2102.

VICTORIA

Doing the Parks Shuffle. The Victorian National Parks Association is concerned about some aspects of the newly reorganized Department of Conservation and Environment. Under the National Parks Act of 1975, the Director of National Parks is responsible directly to the minister. Now the director is required to report through a Deputy Director-General and Director-General, and the VNPA fears some dilution of administrative accountability. National Parks occupy 12% of Victoria, and require both proper, accountable management and adequate funding. However, the VNPA is encouraged that responsibility for the management of all public land in the State now rests with the Parks Division, not the Forests Division.

Premier Joan. Conservationists welcomed the appointment of Joan Kirner as Victorian Premier in August, following the resignation of John Cain. The Wilderness Society was encouraged by the contribution the new Premier had made, during a period as Minister for Conservation, Forests & Lands, to the causes of environmental education and protection of wilderness. New Minister for Conservation and Environment Steve Crabb received a less enthusiastic welcome. Tougher times may be ahead for conservation in Victoria. Of the decision to allow logging in the National Estate forests of East Gippsland, Mr Crabb is reported to have said: 'The decisions that don't upset somebody don't get to me'.

Flying Foxes? In a recent interview on the subject of Leadbeater's possum (the State faunal emblem, so rare it was once thought to be extinct), Minister for Conservation and Environment Steve Crabb was asked about the threat posed to the possum's habitat by

logging. He replied that foxes were a greater threat than logging, and his department would do something about foxes. Scientists point out that Leadbeater's possum is an entirely arboreal animal, and that foxes are not known for their ability to climb trees. On the other hand, the present programme of logging and ash roading in the State's Central Highlands will kill many of the rare possums and may lead to their extinction.

Brian Walters

TASMANIA

Accord Felled. Large areas of forest were threatened with destruction, and the future of the minority Labor Government placed in doubt, by the adoption in late September of a forest strategy prepared without the participation of the conservation movement. Among other things, the strategy raised the State's woodchip export quota to such an extent that Tasmania will soon be providing 70% of the woodchips exported from Australia. This in effect brought to an end the accord between Labor and the parliamentary Green Independents which put Labor into government after the last election.

The trouble began part-way through talks between the logging industry, unions, farmers and conservationists which, it was hoped, would resolve the conflict over Tasmania's forests. The government declared that there would be no new World Heritage nominations for three years, and no new National Parks without the support of the mining industry. This cut the ground from under the conservationists taking part in the talks. Then, in early September, when the talks appeared likely to break down, the government stepped in again and gave the warring parties just three days to reach agreement. A proposal was prepared outside the process of consensus which had until then governed the talks, and the government adopted it.

The strategy is disastrous for conservation. Most disturbing is the decision to allocate 1.1 million hectares of the State's publicly owned forests permanently to wood production. These will be managed primarily for logging unless contrary legislation is passed by both houses of the Tasmanian Parliament; given the conservative nature of the Upper House, the latter is extremely unlikely.

More than 184,000 hectares of National Estate forests are affected. They include: the Great Western Tiers; the Huon Track (a traditional walking route to Federation Peak) as far as Blakes Opening; about 25% of the north-western rain forests; Jackeyes Marsh; and many other parts of the south-west.

As well, the strategy will entrench destructive practices such as clear-felling and burning of native forests; cable logging of the steepest slopes; and an unsustainable rate of cutting.

The Greens are in an invidious position. The threat posed by the new forest strategy is worse than any experienced under former Premier, and still Liberal leader, Robin Gray. The Greens have the power to bring down Premier Michael Field's Government. They have decided for the moment not to use that power.

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Small Consolation. As a token gesture to conservation, the government announced that the setting aside of 1.1 million hectares for wood production would be accompanied by the addition of 4,300 hectares to the State's National Park system. New parks will include South-east Cape (adjacent to the existing World Heritage Area), part of the Navarre Plains near Lake St Clair, and a patch of inaccessible forest near Hartz Mountains National Park.

Bob Burton

sightings occurred. For copies of the proposal, or information about the Panama Forest Action Group, phone Kristina Hesketh on (003) 95 6153.

Wilderness Education. The Wilderness Society is determined to encourage the spread of information about the environment among students at all levels of schooling. The society's Education Unit produces a catalogue of materials for use by teachers and librarians. The range is wide, and much thought and

er Rob Blakers and water-colour artist Tony Smibert.

For those who wish to go completely wild, there will be a six-day walk in the Central Highlands on a route no one has used before and no one will use again—provided you tread softly, of course, and leave no trace of your passing.

Brochures from: the Wilderness Society, 112 Emu Bay Rd, Deloraine, Tas 7304; Tasmanian Travel Centres; and other TWS shops and offices.

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Save the World.

Above, this poster is part of the Wilderness Society's wilderness education effort. Right, film-maker, Roger Scholes (who directed the popular feature film *The Tale of Ruby Rose*), foreground, during filming of *The Last Tall Forests* for the Wilderness Society. Wilderness Society collection

No Danger. Douglas-Apsley National Park, gazetted last year, will soon be managed from a ranger station to be established in the nearby township of Bicheno. Douglas-Apsley contains the last undisturbed dry forest catchment on the east coast, and was the State's first new National Park in seven years.

BB

Macquarie Nominated. After stalling for months, the Tasmanian Government recently agreed to the nomination of Macquarie Island for inclusion on the World Heritage List. Macquarie thus joins Heard Island and the McDonald Islands in the Federal Government's proposal (see Green Pages, *Wild* no 37).

BB

The Elusive Thylacine. The reported view of the State Government is that the thylacine, or Tasmanian tiger, is probably extinct. Despite this, many individuals continue to nurture the hope that the animal survives, for some, this is evidently more than a hope. The Golconda Community Group has distributed to environment groups, governments and the forest industry copies of a report which describes ten apparent sightings of the thylacine during the last 20 years. The group has proposed a moratorium on logging, mining and the use of 1080 poison in all forests which might harbour tigers. These include the Panama Forest in north-eastern Tasmania, where all the alleged

effort have gone into the selection of video and audio tapes, books and posters, and the preparation of teachers' guides and education kits. Videos added to the list this year include *Tiga* (see Reviews, page 91), *The Last Tall Forests* (see Information, *Wild* no 35), and the six titles in the *Australian Wilderness* series, shown recently on national television. Teachers' guides have been written to accompany these videos. Four multi-media education kits are available: the award-winning *Wilderness: the Original and the Best of Planet Earth*, and others on East Gippsland, Antarctica and Kakadu. The catalogue, complete with mail-order form, is available from the Wilderness Society Education Programme, 59 Hardware St, Melbourne, Vic 3000—or phone (03) 670 5229.

Walks on the Wild Side. The Wilderness Society will this summer conduct a number of guided walks and workshops for people who would like to experience wild places at first hand but lack the skill or the physique required for extended bushwalks. The programme will combine recreation with education. Local botanists and ecologists will be employed as guides wherever possible, and will assist with interpretation of the natural environment.

The Douglas-Apsley walk is designed for families with older children, or for those who like to walk at an easy pace. The Great Western Tiers and forest tours will comprise a series of day walks from a central campsites.

Participants in an ecology workshop will study Tasmanian rain forests with the assistance of two well-qualified local scientists. An artists' wilderness camp will consist of six days' instruction with wilderness photograph-



SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Wilpena Controversy. According to the October issue of *Conservation News*, conservationists in South Australia are up in arms over recent actions of the State Government which, they say, pre-empt three reviews of natural resource management and planning procedures and an appeal to the High Court. The ACF and the SA Conservation Council have been granted leave to present their case against the development of a large tourist resort in Wilpena Pound, within Flinders Ranges National Park. Then, in September, the government moved to introduce legislation designed to enable the development to go ahead. For more information, contact Jacquie Gillen at the ACF in Adelaide—(08) 232 2566.

Readers' contributions to this department, including colour slides, are welcome. Typed items of less than 200 words are more likely to be printed. Send to the Editor, *Wild*, PO Box 415, Prahran, Victoria 3181.

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Camping in the Snow

Wild Ideas

How to become a four-season camper in a few easy steps, by *Brian Walters*

▲ PERHAPS YOU'VE BEEN BUSHWALKING FOR a few years. You've heard about snow camping, and you'd like to try it, but...well, the idea of sleeping in the snow seems just a bit daunting. Here are a few tips to make the first time easier.

Choosing a tent. Almost any tent can be adequate in the snow. However, in windy conditions such as are commonly experienced above the tree line, a modern tunnel or dome tent will serve you far better than one which relies on vertical poles. When you choose a tent for use in the snow, look especially for three qualities: 1 A vestibule. This is a great place to cook in bad weather and to leave snow-encrusted gaiters and other gear. 2 A good shape for shedding snow. Avoid two extremes: tents with a flattish surface on top which might hold snow, and tents with a narrow ridge which will simply deposit snow on lower parts of the roof. 3 Ease of erection. In bad weather you want to get into shelter snappily, and your fingers may be numb with cold. Look for a tent which needs few pegs, poles with sections that are shock-corded together so you don't need to spend time assembling them, and a simple design.

However, if you have an ordinary, old-fashioned bushwalking tent, it will suffice when you are starting out provided you are sensible in avoiding times and places where the weather is likely to be extreme.

Choosing a campsite. Choose a site for your tent with care. It's surprising how often ski tourers will find a patch of snow grass, free of any snow, where they can simply pitch a tent in the normal way. If you must pitch on snow, find the flattest site you can. You may think that snow is soft, and that a slope will level out, but slopes stay there when you put a tent on them. Avoid overhanging trees loaded with clods of ice and snow: these can unload in the night and flatten your tent.

It is desirable on the one hand to be in a sheltered spot, but on the other to avoid places where big snow-drifts may build up. If you are out in the open when it is windy, your tent will flap around and be difficult to erect and to strike. Nevertheless, I once saw three metres of snow accumulate in a single night in the lee of a large boulder—not a good place to camp. Try to find a balance.

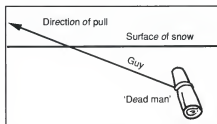
Pitching your tent in snow. Prepare your site. While still on skis, tread evenly all over the area where your tent is to go, compressing the snow into a firm, even base. The firmer the surface, the less likely it will be to develop lumps and irregularities in the night. Don't tramp all over the site in your boots: each step will create a crater which may freeze to concrete hardness.

Ordinary tent pegs are useless in snow. There is a variety of alternatives. Snow pegs can be obtained, but in soft snow these are only a marginal improvement if used in the conventional way. Stocks and skis can make excellent pegs, although this limits your capacity for recreational skiing while your tent is pitched. A very effective way to secure a tent



Above, the summit of Mt Fainter North is one of the most spectacular 'bedrooms' in the Victorian Alps (Mt Feathertop in the background). Glenn van der Knijff

in snow is by using 'dead men', for which sticks or snow pegs can be quite adequate. If you need to attach a guy to a fixed point in the snow, tie it to the middle of a stick or snow peg (dead man) and bury this so that it lies at right angles to the direction of pull.



Anchoring a tent with a buried billy is equally effective, but this makes it hard to do the cooking. If your tent has vertical poles, place dishes or other flat objects under them so that they won't sink into the snow.

Cooking. Avoid cooking in the tent: the risk of fire from stoves is real and the consequences can be disastrous. Even when cooking in the vestibule, be careful. Spill fuel can ignite and some types of stoves, particularly Shellite-fuelled ones, can explode. In cold weather, Shellite and butane stoves don't function well, and Shellite stoves should be fitted with pumps; it may be better to take a stove which burns methylated spirits. Make sure there is plenty of ventilation so that you don't breathe the fumes from your stove.

When using a stove on snow, place it on a snow shovel or plate of some description—a cork tile is ideal. This will prevent it from melting the surrounding snow and beginning to sink below the surface: once you have started cooking, it can be difficult and dangerous to correct this problem.

I like to dig a pit in the snow in which to cook, and seats to surround it. In this way the stove is sheltered and you can cook in comfort. Take

something to sit on, such as a Therm-a-Rest or closed-cell-foam mat. Your stove will soon use up all the oxygen in its sunken area, so dig a small trench to allow a flow of fresh air. In most alpine areas it is no longer environmentally responsible to light fires. Even in winter they are likely to burn down to the natural vegetation and leave fire scars. Take a stove, and use it!

Melting snow for water should be a last resort. The crystalline structure of snow must be broken down before it melts; this takes time and uses a lot of fuel. Often you will find a creek, and where this is not possible, remember: ice melts more readily than snow. If you must melt snow, compress it as hard as you can into the billy: it will melt more quickly.

Overnight. Prepare for two things overnight: intense cold, and the possibility of further snowfalls.

Few sensations are more unpleasant than trying to pull on boots that are frozen stiff. Before you retire for the night, knock the excess snow off your boots and place them in a large, sturdy plastic bag. This can be sealed tightly and kept in your sleeping bag so the boots will not be frozen in the morning.

Make sure no gear is left where it can be buried by snow. Gather up billys and put them away (snow is a very effective scourer), and stand your skis vertically in the snow with sufficient force so they will not blow over. Loop your stocks by their straps over the skis so they cannot fall over and be buried.

Keep snow out of your tent. If it gets in, your body heat will melt it and leave pools of water for you to sleep in. Leave gaiters and other snowy items out in the vestibule. If you have been sitting on your sleeping mat and it has snow on it, carefully position the mat under the floor of the tent so that it will still keep you warm but won't bring any snow into your tent.

Keeping warm. A Therm-a-Rest or closed-cell-foam mat is virtually essential to insulate you from the snow. Take a good sleeping bag, suitable for the sub-zero conditions you are likely to experience. Thermal clothing, including long underwear and a jacket for around

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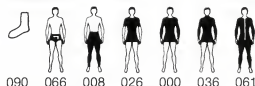
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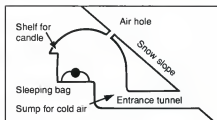
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Wild Ideas

camp, will be a good investment. Gaiters are great for keeping snow out of your boots.

Igloos and snow caves. Building an igloo or snow cave is fun and they can be more comfortable to live in than a tent in the snow, particularly if you need a base camp. (For a detailed article on snow shelters, see *Wild* no 25.) But you should always take a tent: you may need it to camp quickly if the weather is bad. It takes a few hours to build either a snow cave or an igloo. A snow shovel is essential, and a snow saw is a great advantage.

You will need to be at relatively high altitudes in Australia to make a good snow cave as it requires a large drift of well-compacted snow. It is probably only feasible in the Kosciuszko National Park or the Bogong High Plains region of the Victorian Alps. You can use your own imagination, but this diagram shows a good, functional design.



Make sure you keep your snow shovel in the cave so that you can dig your way out in case of a big snowfall. A stock thrust through the roof makes an excellent air hole; you may need to clear it during the night. Avoid leaving gear around the entrance, where you might lose it in a heavy snowfall or in an avalanche down the slope of the snow drift.

In temperatures above zero, igloos sag and collapse—this makes them unsettling places in which to spend a balmy night—but in cold conditions they are reinforced by any additional snow that falls, and the overnight freeze makes them set like concrete. It is best not to be too ambitious with your igloo. Keep it just big enough to sleep in, as a larger one can be very difficult to complete. Again, the snow will need to be firm enough to hold its shape when you cut blocks from it. Cut your snow blocks from the floor area of the igloo, so that the floor goes down as the walls go up. A tunnel under the wall makes a simple entrance. Start to slope your walls in to create the domed roof from the second row of snow bricks or you will be left to bridge a gaping chasm. Leave a high area in the floor so that you can reach the apex of the roof to fit the last block into place. Whether you are in a snow cave or an igloo, you will need to make the internal surface smooth and round; otherwise you will be dripped on in the night.

Camping in the snow can be fun. It is an opportunity to come to terms with a different environment, and to get near the best areas for ski touring. Once you have tried it, you will find your own ways to stamp snow camping with your personal brand of adventure. Enjoy it! ▲

Brian Walters (see Contributors in *Wild* no 1) is a bushwalker and Nordic skier with a strong commitment to the preservation of our wild places. A barnstier from Melbourne, he defended the protesters arrested and charged with trespass in the summer of 1989-90 in the National Estate forests of East Gippsland, Victoria.

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Said Than Done

Pete Griffiths tried hard to stay off the beaten track on a visit to Snowy Bluff and Moroka Gorge in Victoria's Alps

▲ IS IT POSSIBLE TO WALK FOR FOUR days in the Victorian Alps and avoid tracks completely? Well, no—but you can have a lot of fun trying! One Easter, I arranged to meet four friends at McFarlane Saddle in the heart of the then Wonnangatta–Moroka National Park, to see just how much time we could spend travelling through untouched bush. We intended to climb Snowy Bluff—once regarded as the most remote mountain in Victoria—traverse the untracked range to the east, and pass through the lovely and rugged Moroka Gorge before returning to our starting point.

A cutting wind and low, ragged clouds greeted us as we parked our cars, which hardly encouraged the exchange of small talk. Heads down, hands in pockets, we set off on the first stretch of road-bashing to the Dry Hills. Hardly an auspicious way to begin an off-track walking tour, the Dry Hills track was nevertheless quite pleasant and provided a good warm-up for Nick, our navigator.

The plan was to strike out northwards from the top of the range, recross the Moroka Road and enter the forest on the other side. An abandoned logging track was to be our 'catching fence' to prevent us from going too far. In theory it seemed easy, but once into the scrub the pace dropped to a crawl as we negotiated chaotic logging regrowth—a mess of tangled saplings and treacherous, rotten logs. Light rain compounded the problem by coating everything with a greasy layer of slime. It was hard work, and just as I was beginning to feel that we had gone too far and that our track was a figment of the cartographer's imagination, it appeared and gave us a good excuse for a breather.

The campsite was a long way off, however, so we soon pressed on down the track to a point from which the leader intended diverging once more into the forest. The first surprise was the



Above, the Moroka valley is one of the most attractive in the Victorian Alps. Left, on Snowy Bluff—one of the most elusive, and desirable, Victorian Alpine summits. All photos Pete Griffiths

succession of little orange track markers which suddenly appeared. These informed us that we were following the Angus McMillan Track and, to judge by their condition, were a recent addition to the area. The second surprise was that this track branched off the old road at precisely the point where we'd intended to leave it. Had our leader possessed prior knowledge of this new track, or was it just coincidence? Nick claimed ignorance, but he usually knows more than he lets on and I was not so sure. We eventually left this rough foot track as it sidled off the ridge, down towards a tributary of the Moroka; our own route led over a small peak before we too were to descend to the river near Higgins Yards.

The climbing through rock shelves covered in alpine grasses and twisted gums was easy. From the summit a grand vista opened up along the Moroka River, the valley's bare and tortured form majestically wild under a brooding sky. Our first goal, Snowy Bluff, sat aloof

across the valley from our vantage point—isolated, serene, and defended by cliffs. Upstream, we could just make out the depths of the Moroka Gorge, occasional flashes of silver showing the river's path through the shadows. It was a grand feeling to be in ancient country that had no mark of interference—which did, however, show signs of imminent downpour! Patchy rain clouds, sweeping up the valley towards us, signalled that it was time to depart. A delicate, rocky spur led down to a final band of cliffs. These marked the transition from the heights to the grasslands. Meandering through sparse forest, up to my calves in grass and wild flowers, I felt I was in a vast, natural parkland. Soon a four-wheel-drive track appeared. We followed it downstream, grateful for a passage through the masses of blackberries that clung to the riverbanks, but pondering the question of which had come first—the blackberries or the track. Vehicles occasionally passed us, dragging wood for their owners' bonfires; the noise of trail bikes and chain-saws bit into the calm afternoon air. It was depressing to be tramping through ever-widening

mud-holes along the track, and I think there was a general sense of relief when the time came to ford the river and climb away from the auto tents and generators.

The river was low and the crossing easy, but ahead lay a steep climb to our camp. It was getting to be a long day. Painstakingly picking a route through rocky bluffs and along faint foot pads, I began once more to feel relaxed and happy. The country was clear and the walking easy, and the views gradually opened as we ascended our spur. Impressive cliffs dominated the ranges all around and seemed to be enclosing us in every direction. This was truly wild country and it was exciting to know that the following days would take us up into the very heart of it. Our camp, delicately perched on a cliff next to a small waterfall, was idyllic, and as the evening sky faded into pastel shades of purple and mauve, we ate our meal in satisfaction and contentment.

Morning dawned cold but clear. There was no getting around it—the way ahead was steep, and thick with scrub in places. Each footstep, however, was height gained, and the morning passed

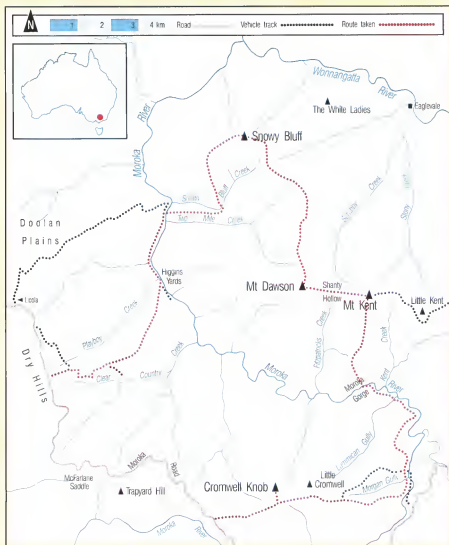
quickly. Near the summit of Snowy Bluff the tangled undergrowth petered out, leaving native grasses and tall trees. There were signs of fire all about, where lightning had struck some years before; fallen trees forced minor detours, but generally the walking was easy. One short, sharp scramble up a loose rock slope and we stood on the summit, feeling quite pleased with ourselves. The log-book hidden amongst the blocks of the summit cairn showed that visits are still a rarity; we added our names and moved east to a secondary summit for our midday break.

Descending from the true summit, the trees began to thin and the landscape again opened up about us. We were given a grandstand view of all the country around us. Countless peaks faded into the blueness of the distance and the Moroka quietly pulsed away below us while fluffy, white clouds drifted lazily above; a marvellous spot to linger over lunch, arguing about the identity of various hazy mountains and even doing a bit of kite flying, to the consternation of the local bird life. Away to the east, Mt Kent beckoned. Tomorrow the view would be reversed. Pressing on, we



Above, the way to Mt Kent from Snowy Bluff traverses some magnificent alpine country above the Wonnangatta and Moroka valleys. **Right,** on Mt Dawson, which is crossed on the way from Snowy Bluff to Mt Kent.

Snowy Bluff–Moroka Gorge



made our way along the ridge-tops leading to Mt Dawson. The going was fairly easy: dry forest with a loose, rocky floor enlivened by frequent glimpses of the Wonnangatta River far below. Navigation was easy and the walking relaxed, until eventually Mt Dawson was reached and the steep, slippery descent to our campsite in Shanty Hollow began. After a comic series of slides and the odd fall, five weary walkers went about settling into camp in that dark, gloomy place. I was perfectly comfortable in my down bedding and sleep came easily.

Climbing out of the shadows into the morning sun was delicious; with every metre gained, new scenes appeared and enticed us on. A rock barrier loomed before us and we surmounted it without drama, although our party was not particularly interested in testing any rockclimbing ability. One final struggle with some scrubby snow gums and the summit of Mt Kent appeared, complete with fire track—our first for the best part of two days. I found it easy to ignore. Now our leader took us into more testing country, both physically and navigational. The scrub closed right in and progress became very slow. We were dropping off the side of Mt Kent towards the Moroka Gorge and, although we knew a road circled us somewhere to the



south, Nick took pride in placing our progress as accurately as possible on the map. When we eventually reached the road, we found that he was spot on. This was good work, for our walk had a second purpose—Nick was a candidate for the Bushwalking and Mountaineering Leadership Certificate and one of our party was assessing his skills. Nothing overt, but it introduced a certain pressure to the route-finding which Nick was so far, at least, handling very well indeed.

Once more we took to the forest, and again logging regrowth provided a trial of endurance and compass work. Our goal, Moroka Gorge, lay somewhere ahead at the end of the spur along which we were struggling. In the back of my mind was the possibility that we would simply fall off a final cliff *into* the gorge, which was by now making its presence quite audible. In fact, we came out a little to one side of a particularly high cliff and were able to cross the Moroka just upstream from a large waterfall. Here we found warm sunshine and inviting rock ledges, so lunch was declared and a pleasantly relaxed hour followed. We were obviously back in relative civilization; we greeted other walkers along the well-trodden paths which led to our campsite at Morgans Gully.

Confidence often seems to lead to complacency. Although following evidently popular tracks, somehow we soon lost contact with the map. The track

we were on was not the correct one, it was getting late, and we were beginning to tire. I guess it didn't really matter; a couple of nice waterfalls along the way kept us interested, and eventually we rejoined our intended route. It's funny how easy it is to relax concentration and be led astray by tracks—especially since we'd never been more than a few metres off course during the previous few days in the trackless bush.

Finally, just on dusk, Morgans Gully appeared. Camp was hastily set up and a small fire soon crackled merrily away in the centre of our little circle. Wispy cloud drifted silently down into the valley, blanketing the trees in soft mist. As it became darker and more peaceful, the sound of revving vehicles and shouting reached us and brought with it a reminder that we were fast approaching the end of our journey. The cold cut campfire conversation short, and one by one we wandered off to our tents.

I awoke to a frozen tent and a definite bite in the air. The briskness provided inspiration to pack quickly and get on the move again, especially as we had a long way to go and one of us had pressing commitments in Melbourne that evening. Soon we'd passed by the cars responsible for the evening's racket (their somnolent owners yet to emerge from their frosty tents), and began the steady climb away from the river. Once again, new roads—already showing signs of erosion—led us on where none were

supposed to exist. Still, with their help we made good progress, pausing only once at Cromwells Knob to take in the view. It was an appropriate place to stop. From a clear rock ledge our whole route lay before us: Snowy Bluff away to the left; the undulating ridge leading to Mt Dawson then swiftly falling to Shanty Hollow; the sharp rise to Mt Kent; and away to the right the shadowed valley of the Moroka. The view was sobering, too,



for it made us realize that we had but barely escaped human impact during our walk. Just below our lovely, virginal ridge line and previously out of our sight, logging roads snaked across hillsides, linking swathes of injured forest. It seemed that no place was safe, no matter how remote it felt nor how much effort was required to reach it.

Back on the fire track, we walked swiftly and with purpose, and soon the Moroka Road appeared with its endless Easter cavalcade of cruising machinery. Passing cars were filled with faces pressed to the glass in astonishment at seeing people actually *walking*, and left as their salute a dust screen that lingered long after their passage. We hadn't reached our own vehicles yet but our journey was over. By the time we got to the car-park, there was nothing to do but join the parade. ▲

Pete Griffiths left his city job at the age of 25 to study Outdoor Education at Bendigo C.A.E. Since then he has spent several seasons working as a river guide, and is now an instructor in outdoor pursuits at a Melbourne secondary school. It is his ambition to complete a Franklin River trip at high water, in fine weather, and without portages.

THE ^{Great} NORTH WALK

A journey through both kinds of wilderness—rural and urban—
by Michael Smith

▲ THE MODERN-DAY PIONEER SETTLER announced, 'You're on private land'. Beside him was a half-built house, and in the background a bulldozer roared as it uprooted trees and reshaped the ground. Having established ownership, he switched off a generator so we could be heard. Once it emerged that we were a couple of city clowns 'lost' in the bush, he warmed a little. We told him where we thought we were and he explained where we really were. He pointed in the direction of 'off'.

We had been attempting to follow the route of the Great North Walk, a narrow strip of public land between Sydney and Newcastle. The walker who for any reason leaves this track is almost certain to be guilty of trespassing. After nine days, this was our biggest bewilderment so far. In the twelve days it eventually took us to complete the walk, we spent a total of about six hours on the wrong route.

We started in the peak hour of a Monday morning in Sydney. A few office workers dared to look at us; most politely ignored us. I imagine they took us for a couple of overseas tourists 'trekking down under', and I doubt whether any of them would have seen much sense in walking to Newcastle. After a quick visit to the Lands Department for the latest information on the route, we boarded the ferry up the Parramatta River to Hunters Hill.

My memories of this place are of tall fences and big pedigree dogs, small shops with high prices, and lots of leaf litter from English trees. Most of that first day was spent walking across parks, round ovals and through remnants of bushland along the Lane Cove River. There were busy roads to cross, duckboards, bridges and lots of signs to keep us on the track. The river here is



Right, heading for a fall? (Crossing Curimbah Creek.) Middle right, cone sticks bloom. Far right, camping cave near Deburghs Bridge, Lane Cove River valley. All photos Michael Smith

TH WALK

tidal and we had to follow it to its source at Thornleigh.

What was that noise? The haunting sound of horn players could be heard for miles. I imagined a group of ladies in white, lacy dresses sitting on chairs in a circle, practising. We passed out of sight below them at Fiddens Wharf. There was an urgency to get as far away from the city as possible for the first night. We were just short of Deburghs Bridge when darkness fell and we camped, probably illegally. We had no choice—our bodies were wrecked. A jackhammer nearby stopped at dark, leaving us with the background noise of traffic. The creek water is polluted so we walked to the

paused to store up some calories. We were now at the source of Berowra Creek and over the next few days had to follow it to salt water. Called the Benowie Walking Track, this section offers surprisingly good walking along the creek, then high up the cliffline. Power

common daily hardships kept us together. If either had pulled out, it would have been the end for the other. I told him of my mother's fears that this total stranger might murder me. Allan's friends apparently suspected that I belonged to some weird sect and at



nearest front yard and borrowed a little from a tap; yet in the middle of Australia's largest city, it was possible to find unspoilt bush in which to camp. The track works its way past sandstone overhangs, mossy and dripping, and there are many wild flowers and few weeds.

On day two we completed the length of the Lane Cove River. Sewer pipes cross the track and can be smelled long before they are seen. A set of traffic lights assisted us safely across Pennant Hills Road outside a Pizza Hut, where we



lines cross the creek and there are occasional glimpses of houses. We camped where we dropped at nightfall. The sound of the water drowned out any traffic noise. Our campsite sloped and I spent the night slipping off my self-inflating mattress. Water was again polluted so we boiled billies of sewage to drink the next day.

It was early winter and day three found us amid superb wild-flower country. There were orchids—though none were in bloom—and I counted 15 species of wild flowers on display. At one point I shouted excitedly, '*Lobelia gibbosa*', and threw down my pack for a photograph. My companion, Allan O'Connor, was learning to be patient. We had found each other through an advertisement in the local paper. Our

some time on the walk would sacrifice him and eat his kidneys!

It was a sunny day but the track was wet. The walking was good except for unavoidable mud and ankle-deep water at the Crosslands. Night fell as we reached Berowra Waters. We pitched the tent on the track, beside an Aboriginal shell midden, and cooked dinner on a rock shelf overhanging the water. Hundreds of boats lay at their moorings. This is still a place of great beauty. The cable ferry only a few hundred metres away busily crossed and recrossed the water, taking lucky workers home to their hide-aways. In the dying light we enjoyed the million-dollar view of this peaceful place.

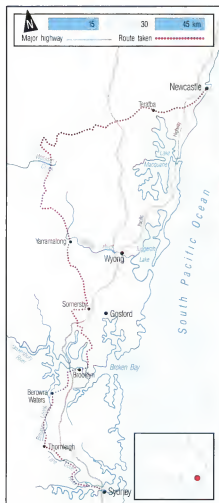
The development of the Great North Walk is a project of the NSW Lands

Department. Our tent was still up in the morning when two track construction workers arrived, delighted to find someone doing the whole walk. They were a mine of information and we spent an hour talking about the sections ahead.

From Berowra Waters to Cowan we followed an underdeveloped route marked only with red ribbon wrapped round trees and bushes. Although the going was heavy, we were glad to be at last in virgin bush—all flowers and wallaby dung. Our red markers led down to the creek and a waterfall. The lushness of the vegetation and the wild atmosphere make this one of God's special places. Growing on the bare rock where we must cross the waterfall were half a dozen sundews. These carnivorous plants are about the size of a 50-cent piece and usually live in nitrogen-poor soil. This was the first time I had seen them on bare rock, rooted apparently in an invisible crack. Many people might fail to notice them, and crunch them underfoot. I hope this area is never tamed by steps and tracks.

Later in the day we met a local resident on a fire track. We were glad to talk to someone new, and Sue was interested in our endeavour and thrilled to learn that she has a namesake amongst the wild

Great North Walk



Above, on the right 'track', Hunters Hill. **Near right,** tranquil Kingtree Ridge Road. **Far right,** banksia.

flowers—black-eyed Susan. We entered Cowan to the usual chorus of dogs barking, and pigged out on what the general store had to offer. We spent the next two hours looking for a campsite. All we wanted was a dry, level area big enough to accommodate our tent. It was dark when we camped, probably trespassing, just outside the Muogamarra Nature Reserve. We pitched our tent silently and went straight to bed. Every half hour, three dogs came up to a fence 50 metres away and barked for five minutes.

The Great North Walk wasn't quite ready for us. An alternative section in the Jerusalem Bay area had recently

received a 'no go' from the Urban Transit Authority. We had been advised to travel through 'the Mog' even though officially this was not permitted. Up very early, we slipped through before anyone was about. At the end of the nature reserve we spent a worried hour finding a safe way down sheer sandstone cliffs, and walked to Brooklyn.

We retrieved food dumped at Hawkesbury River railway station and scoffed some, then took the water taxi across the Hawkesbury to Little Wobby. Cliff-top walking and fabulous views made this a rewarding section. Having camped for the last four nights where probably we shouldn't, we were due to stay at an approved campsite. The Tanks, as it is known, was a big disappointment—picked clean of

firewood and littered with tin cans, aluminium foil and a car body in the middle of the creek.

The morning chorus of birds woke us to a wet day. We left this ruined place by what appeared to be a watercourse but proved instead to be a degraded fire track. The bush was now pleasant and

a thin one entering. There was blood on Allan's sleeping bag.

We spent the next three days on farm roads—first bitumen, then dirt, then bush-bashing along a trail of red tape to another dirt road. It was a battle each day to find a place to camp that was not privately owned.



heath-like. Crossing the Hawkesbury had landed us in the territory of the leech. The first few were burned off, but were quickly replaced by others. I learnt to cover my feet with insect repellent before putting on shoes and socks. One has to be philosophical, however, about pitching a tent on a leech-infested site. The loathsome creatures were arching about all over the ground, where they were distributed about 20 centimetres apart. We had no choice and just had to put them out of our minds. In the morning a fat leech was seen leaving the tent and

The highlight of the walk for me was a section of primeval rain forest north of Somersby. For hours we would stop every minute and flick six leeches off each shoe. No sunshine ever hits the ground there, and any rain stays where it falls. Everything is cool and sodden. In the midst of this awesome magnificence we lost the red tape and had to use map and compass to get out. There were citrus farms, turf farms, chicken farms, piggeries and horse studs, each with a dog that barked at us. We enjoyed a civilized, sit-down meal at the Yarra-

along Manor, and after nine days I phoned home to get news—which all seemed to be bad. My son had broken his arm. The simple thoughts of the traveller were replaced by the things I should have been thinking about.

We were now in the Watagan State Forest, on well-graded, well-marked, leech-free roads. With the scent of victory in our nostrils, it took us just two days to pass through the Watagans. The forest roads were covered with aromatic mounds of wallaby dung, territorially deposited and scratched in. Leech-eating lyre-birds called to us from the leafy darkness. I whistled them a simple



tune three times, and waited. They whistled it back. We were 600 metres above sea level and it was time to head east for the coast.

The book warned us that we would need ropes to get down the steep cliffs at Heaton Gap, but track-makers had beaten us to it; we were grateful to find steps and signposts. We spent the night in the Awaba State Forest.

Last day! The forest tracks were all cut up by motor cycles, and a freeway under construction completed the desecration. At Lake Macquarie we left our packs at a friend's place for the sprint to the finish. We walked with a passion. Only a mugging could stop us now. For the last time I threatened to take Allan's kidneys. We finished at Queens Wharf in darkness and light rain, and decided on a celebratory parling beer at the Queens Wharf Brewery. As I sat down, a man in a sports coat pointed out that I was occupying his chair. I replied that I had just walked 50 kilometres and hadn't sat down for 11 hours, but he wanted his chair. Even here, it seemed, I was trespassing.

The Great North Walk had been more of a journey than a bushwalk. There is hardly an unspoilt place in its length, for through even the most untouched bush flows polluted water. Each day's walk equated to only a 15-minute drive in a motor car. We were not about to reject the comforts of civilization but we were more aware of their cost. ▲

Michael Smith is a surveyor who has spent as much as he could manage of the past 25 years either rockclimbing, caving, canoeing or bushwalking. His current project is to photograph all the wild flower species in his home town, Nelson Bay, NSW.

MT Last-of-all



Australian rockclimbing's best-known crag could have had a different name. Major Mitchell's discovery of Mt Arapiles, by *Nick Stevens*

▲ MOUNTAINS FASCINATED MITCHELL. AS a young boy, he wandered the hills in Stirlingshire, Scotland, sketching eagerly. As an officer in the fiercely fought Peninsular War, he spent weeks of 'enterprise and adventure' in the Spanish Ranges producing the field work so vital to Wellington's war effort.

His first extensive view of New South Wales was from the impressive heights of the Blue Mountains. Mitchell fondly remembered this moment when Hamilton Hume entertained him hospitably in his tent and introduced him to 'the land of the gum trees'.

During his four expeditions Mitchell climbed and named numerous peaks—or 'pics', as he habitually spelt the word. He had a competent climber's eye and was capable of 'quadrumanous progress' over boulders. However, he was quite content to be led up dangerous pitches:

I had observed before ascending [Mt William], those crevices and intervals between rocks, where we might most easily effect an ascent...The upper precipice consisted of cliffs, about 140 feet [42 metres] in perpendicular height. Fortunately the ablest of the men with me, was a house carpenter, and, being accustomed to climb roofs, he managed to get up, and then assist the rest.

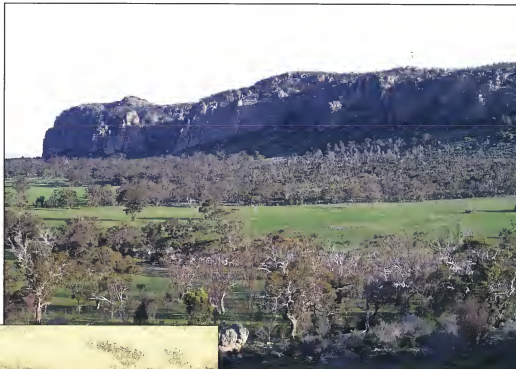
*I carved out my sovereign's name;
By the side of the banished,
but faithful,
I climbed up the steep hill of fame.*

The rockclimbers who 'rediscovered' Mt Arapiles in 1963 must have felt something of the excitement Mitchell experienced when he became the first white man to ascend the hill on the evening of 22 July 1836.

near its base a most remarkable rock resembling a mitre.' So intriguing was the sight that instead of heading south to the coast, he decided to make for this last peculiar outcrop of 'these extreme summits of the southern hemisphere'.

The land Mitchell had discovered was fertile and well watered. He described it thus:

...a country ready for the immediate



Above, Mitre Rock and Lake from Mt Arapiles. This and the illustrations on pages 40–41 are reproduced from *Three Expeditions into the Interior of Eastern Australia* by Thomas Mitchell (facsimile edition, Libraries Board of South Australia, 1965). Above right, the view in the opposite direction today. Chris Baxter. Previous page, Mitchell in later life. Reproduced from Thomas Mitchell, *Surveyor General & Explorer* by J H L Cumpston (Oxford University Press, 1954).

It's not surprising that, towards the end of his life, Mitchell chose to remember his career in terms of the summit and the conquest:

*Farewell to thy mountains, Australia,
To the high icy peaks and the snow...
Deep, deep in thy rocks, O Australia,*

For Mitchell, however, Arapiles was more than a giant playground riddled with spectacular routes. It awoke vivid memories of days spent in distant lands fighting desperate battles. It was an artist's and a naturalist's delight, an impressive geological curiosity, an ambitious explorer's triumph, and a surveyor's boon—a fine place to level a theodolite, take angles, trace tree-lined watercourses and search the plains.

Mitchell first espied Mt Arapiles from the summit of Mt Zero, in the northern Grampians, on 20 July. 'An isolated mass appeared to the westward, having

reception of civilized man...Of this Eden I was the first European to explore its mountains and streams... We had been for some time travelling through forest land, which now opened into grassy and level plains, variegated with belts and clumps of lofty trees, giving to the whole the appearance of a park.

Assistant Surveyor Granville Stapylton, Mitchell's second in command, described the climate as 'literally English in every sense of the word...nothing can surpass the excellent picturesque Beauty of this undulating Forest Country thinly timbered with Forest Oak, Blue Gums and Box Trees'.

Mitchell's party was large, well equipped and well armed. It consisted of 23 men, all convicts or ex-convicts, plus Stapylton and an Aboriginal guide, Piper. Along the way they were joined by two Aboriginal youths (nicknamed Tommy Came-First and Tommy Came-Last) and two native women, one of whom had a young child. Mitchell later took this youngster into his family and had her 'educated'—an 'experiment', he observed, that would be 'useful...in developing hereafter the mental energies of the Australian aborigines'.

The party had provisions for nearly seven months. There were 12 horses, 52 oxen, 100 sheep, assorted dogs, five

drays, two carts, five tents, two boats, tools and gunpowder. In addition to his sabre, Mitchell brought sextants, barometers, telescopes, an artificial horizon, an ephemeris of the year, an azimuth compass and a chronometer set upon the meridian of Sydney—vital equipment for an explorer-surveyor and 19th century gear freak.

On 22 July, after a day's journey of about 25 kilometres, they set up camp; a tight military operation with tents, fires and carts rigorously aligned according to Mitchell's constant custom. Their camp, 'on a dark coloured soil, from which arose [a] peculiar smell', lay close beneath the western bluff of Mt Arapiles, below the present Major Mitchell Look-out, on a spot now marked tentatively by the Major Mitchell Obelisk.

An undated and unauthorized pencilled note on a large-scale plan of the area drawn in 1850 places the campsite some five kilometres to the south-west of the western bluff. However, this does not square with Mitchell's or Stapylton's descriptions and movements. The true site, as far as can be determined, appears to have been in the area already described, just outside the boundary of the present State Park.

A little before sunset, Mitchell scrambled up a western extremity of the hill, hoping to locate the Wimmera. Instead he saw 'the sun setting over numerous [salt] lakes...This certainly was a remarkable portion of the earth's surface, and rather resembled that of the moon as seen through a telescope'.

Darkness began to fall and he returned to camp. It was not until after midnight, however, that the last cart was finally brought in. Over soft, wet ground the carts and drays moved slowly and continually became bogged. In Stapylton's opinion, the drivers were worse than useless:

Remained to the rear to see the Bullock Drivers do their Duty instead of smoking and looking like fools at



Above, Mitchell's drawing of the western extremity of Mt Arapiles.

each other as is their wont when in a difficulty. Drays bogged...Broke ring bolts, yokes, chains and shafts...Bullock's necks terribly galled...[I am] quite enraged at the severe whipping and awful blackguarding [the bullocks] receive...If men are to be sent to the Devil for swearing Botany Bay Bullock Drivers must be inevitably damned.

On the morning of 23 July, Mitchell ascended the eastern and principal summit. In a territory so monotonously flat that James Bonwick, who journeyed through the area in 1857, could write in jest, 'I actually got off my horse once to do honour to a stone a cubic yard in measure', the spectacular forms and bold remoteness of the rock caught the imagination of both Mitchell and Stapylton.

An excellent and patient draughtsman, Mitchell made several sketches: one of the western extremity (reproduced, reversed, in the 1978 rockclimbers' guidebook); another of Mitre Rock and Mitre Lake in which two small figures look out over the present site of the popular roof climb Kachoong (grade 21) towards a splendid sunset. Although rather stylized—Mitchell's romanticism

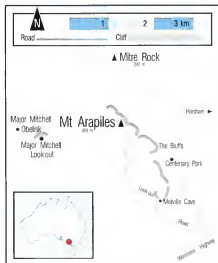
was conventional rather than ecstatic—the scenes are peaceful and beautifully detailed.

Stapylton, in his journal, was particularly contemplative:

The rocks of this mountain are very fine and bold Huge Columnar Pillars of Primitive Sandstone...notwithstanding the scene is picturesque still a gloominess pervades throughout—not A bird to be seen on the Waters all salt—still and silent...Can such be the original formation of the earth and does the same formation exist under the sea?...It is a State of things such as one might imagine...the last man to have ruminated upon...

The party spent three nights at Arapiles. During his stay Mitchell also sketched the curious surrounding lakes, discovered 12 new plants including 'a fine new species of *Baeckea*, forming a handsome evergreen bush, the ends of whose graceful branches were closely covered with small white delicate flowers', worked on his journals, field notes and meteorological records, and made numerous forays up and around the mountain. His conquest (according to the current rockclimbing guidebook) of the present-day beginners' route Faggot (grade 7) on horseback must remain one of the most original climbs of the 19th century!

Mt Arapiles





For Mitchell it was a fine and satisfying camp, one of the best on this, his third, most successful and most controversial expedition. He loved the natural rhythms and rigours of camp life:

The sense of gratification and repose is intense and cannot be known to him whose life is counted out in a monotonous succession of hours of eating and sleeping within a house; whose food is adulterated by spices and sauces intolerable to real hunger—and whose drink, instead of the sweet refreshing distillation from the heavens, consists of vile artificial extracts, loathed by the really thirsty man, with whom the pure element resumes its true value, and establishes its real superiority over every artificial beverage.

On the morning of 25 July, Mitchell left Arapiles and headed south-west towards 'the shores of the Southern Ocean'.

How did Mitchell arrive at the name Mt Arapiles? The choice was neither as spontaneous as Mitchell would have us believe, nor as sentimental as some historians have argued. In his *Three Expeditions* (written in England more than a year after the event, and following considerable official and public criticism for his massacre of Aborigines near Mt Dispersion on 27 May 1836), Mitchell

Mt Broughton also. A singular shaped rock at the east end Mitre Rock.'

Stapylton continues to refer to the rock as Mt Broughton until 30 July, when he records excitedly that:

Mt Broughton is to have the more distinguished appellation of Mount Salamanca because it so happened that the Surveyor General ascended it on the Anniversary of that Battle—another good hit at the Frenchmen who have been very active with their disignations of Capes on the Southern Coast of our Territory the name is also appropriate as being in unison with the Royal distinctions of Guelielmean Mountains [Grampians] and Mount Royal Future Travellers will applaud the propriety of these names and will at once declare them to have [been] prompted by the correct notions of A true Briton and A Soldier.

The matter was still not settled, however, for Mitchell's field notes refer to 'Mt Broughton, alias Mt Salamanca... Mt Last-Ditch...to be called Mt Last-of-all'.

Finally, at a date uncertain, the rock became Mt Arapiles—named after the North and South Arapiles, the two peaks which rise above the plains of Salamanca near the town of Arapiles in Spain. (A picture of the outcrop may be seen in the Natimuk Historical Museum.)

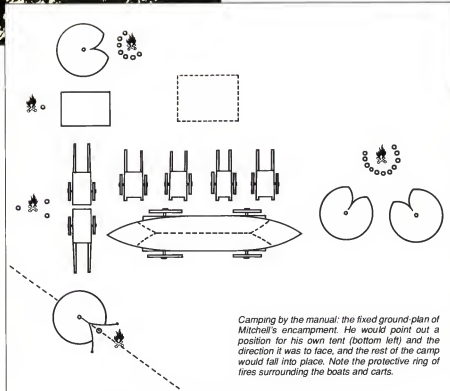
Unlike some of today's climbers, Mitchell wanted his routes to be followed and took great care with names, aiming at simplicity, utility and honour. 'I have always gladly adopted aboriginal names', Mitchell wrote in his journal—a statement rather at odds with Stapylton's casual note that 'Piper carries A Pair of Handcuffs slung round him as [a native] must be take Prisoner for the sake of obtaining native names of Pelaces'.

However, the Aborigines were wary, Mitchell's memories were strong and his patriotism stout, and more than 20 features discovered on his third expedition were named after individuals or places he had encountered during his service in Spain and France.

There is no evidence to support the widespread belief that one of Mitchell's brothers died at the Battle of Salamanca. Mitchell lost many brother officers at that battle. Wellington returned his loss in the British units alone as 3,129 and the total number of casualties was around 20,000. Thus 22 July 1812 would have remained a vivid memory even without family loss.

At the time Mitchell wrote his *Three Expeditions* he was also completing work for Wyld's *Atlas of Maps and Plans of the Principal Movements, Battles and Sieges of the War 1810–1812*, so the final choice of the name Arapiles seems most appropriate. ▲

Nick Stevens is a journalist, relief milker and former teacher from Gippsland, Victoria, who has written a radio play about Granville Stapylton, Major Mitchell's ill-fated assistant. Nick visited Mt Arapiles in 1984, was dragged up by a Major (grade 9) in sandshoes, and fell in love with rockclimbing.

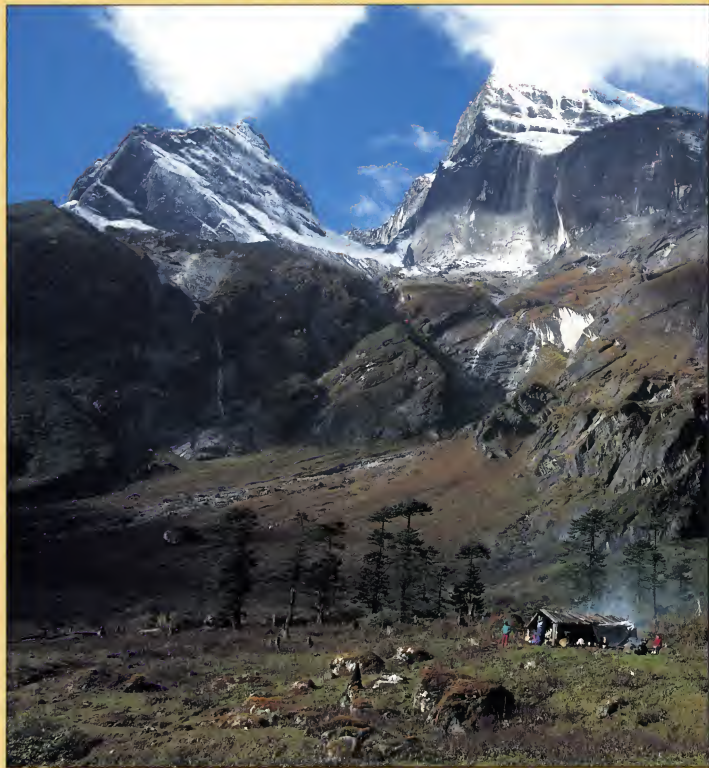


He observed and described the area's geology, continued his surveying work, collected shells from Mitre Lake, and took specimens of the water for analysis by Professor Farady (who later reported that it had a 'specific gravity of 1038.6, and 3 measured ounces of it yielded 77 grains of dry saline matter').

notes simply, 'I ascended this hill on the anniversary of the battle of Salamanca, and hence the name [Mt Arapiles]'.

However, in Stapylton's randomly punctuated and idiosyncratically spelt journal, the outcrop is first referred to as Mt Broughton. 'July 22...at encampment a high mountain close East of us named

MAKALU PIL



GRIMAGE



Greg Child discovers that what you learn along the way can be as important as what's at the end

▲ EVEN ON A GOOD DAY, THE TREK TO Makalu Base Camp isn't easy. Makalu, the world's fifth highest mountain, lies 20 kilometres south-west of Mt Everest on the border between Nepal and Tibet. The 110 kilometre trek follows a roller-coaster foot track, starting at Tumlingtar and meandering along a 2,000 metre high ridge past the villages of Khanbari, Bhotabas and Num. At Num the track abruptly drops 1,000 metres to the raging Arun River, crosses a suspension bridge, then climbs slowly through sweltering jungle past the village of Tashigaon to surmount the 4,075 metre alpine wonderland of Shipton Pass. Here the country becomes utterly wild and is traversed only by religious pilgrims and the occasional yak herder. Prayer flags, shrines and mani walls (prayer walls) dot the landscape around Shipton Pass and mark the way down the knee-crunching descent from the pass and along the Barun River, for this river leads to Barun Pokhari, a sacred lake beneath Makalu, the destination of an arduous Hindu pilgrimage. All told, to reach Makalu Base Camp at 4,800 metres requires at least nine days of walking.

There is good reason for trekkers to avoid Nepal from June until October; it has to do with the way the country turns into a virtual aquarium of humidity and thunderstorms during the monsoon. March to May and October to November are the preferred periods for trekking in Nepal, but a mountaineer wanting to reach base camp and catch the brief spell of calm weather between the monsoon's end and the onset of the winter winds—late September till mid-October—has no choice but to brave the notoriously uncomfortable wet season. As luck would have it, the monsoon of 1988 was freakishly heavy.

Our group consisted equally of climbers and trekkers. The climbers

Left, camp at Yangri, below Shiva's cave. All photos Greg Child

hoped to scale Makalu; the trekkers had come to experience Nepal's most rugged and unspoiled walking route. Torrential rain fell in sheets all day and every day for a week, dogging us and the Gorong, Rai, Chhetri and Sherpa villagers we'd hired to carry our loads to base camp, clearing only enough to give suggestions of the verdant, terraced hillsides that are Nepal's hallmark.

The full-body water torture of the monsoon presented no real difficulty for the trekkers—especially since most of them were English. In fact, the rain proved to be a sort of cultural catalyst, encouraging the Nepali villagers to invite us into the shelter of every wayside chhang house. A chhang house is the Nepali equivalent of a pub, where chhang, temba and rakshi—the Nepali alcoholic trinity—may be sampled. Chhang is a milky beer brewed from rice or millet; temba is a similar concoction, but is served warm in a bamboo jug and imbibed through a straw. As for the clear, white spirit called rakshi, the best description came from the owner of the bottle from which I first sipped: 'One man, one bottle: completely drunk'.

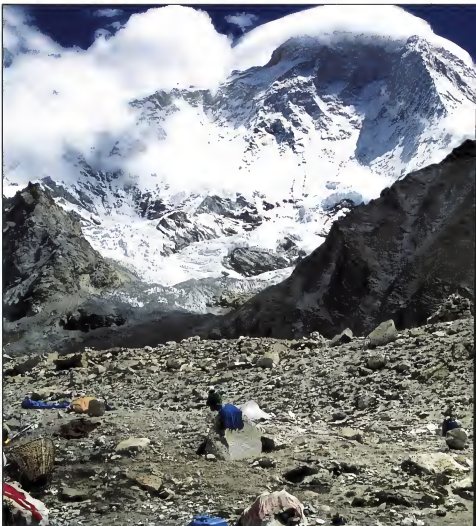
Really, the rain and the chhang-house casualties weren't a problem. It was the earthquakes and the leeches—the Nepali call the latter 'jukaa'—that set everyone's nerves on edge.

The earthquake hit in the pre-dawn hours of our third day out. We were all still asleep in our sodden tents, quietly growing moss, on the outskirts of a hamlet called Chichira. First the earth rattled, then a rippling, fluid motion started. I felt a sudden fear that the waterlogged ground would liquefy and our ridgetop camp slide into the valley of the Arun River; but, as suddenly as it had begun, the quake stopped. Elsewhere in Nepal and India, houses had collapsed and lives had been lost.

The quake turned some of the trekkers off their breakfast, but it didn't deter the leeches from theirs. As the call to rise went up next morning, one trekker emerged from his tent still dressed in the Gore-Tex rainsuit, boots, gaiters and gloves he'd slept in—a supposedly leech-proof suit of armour. With cuffs and hood laced tightly around him, he'd reckoned on being safe from invertebrate invasion; but a leech loves a challenge.

The trekker appeared at the doorway of my tent coughing and sneezing, yelling 'Get it out! Get it out!'. He pointed to a leech embedded in his nostril. I did my best to help. I tugged at it, stretching the creature to triple its normal length, but it just kept slapping back into his nose like a strip of Pirelli rubber. The poor man became unglued, frantically pulling at the beast until the doctor restored order by administering the salt shaker. Salt is hell for leeches.

Two days out of Tashigaon we crossed Shipton Pass and descended to the



Above, Makalu Base Camp must be one of the more dramatic locations on Earth. **Right,** burning a juniper offering in Shiva's cave.

bank of the Barun River, hopping over a hundred swollen tributaries to arrive, footsore and soaked, at the riverside meadow of Yangri. This lush pasture is used by the people of Tashigaon for grazing zum (a hybrid of the cow and the yak).

Awaking on the ninth morning, I noticed that something was different: there was no rain pelting the skin of my tent. Poking my head out of the entrance, I saw blue for the first time in eight days. The worst of the monsoon had ended.

The view was worth the long wait. Above our grassy flats loomed huge cliffs, festooned with tropical vegetation. Capping the cliffs lay a glacial plateau upon which sat two 6,000 metre mountains: Peak 6 and Peak 7. At the head of the valley, the south flank of Makalu rose high and white.

After spending the morning soaking up the sun and drying wet clothing, we set off late. We followed the Barun past several crude stupas. These dome-shaped rock stacks, decorated with prayer flags flying from bamboo sticks, indicated that we were passing a place holy to Buddhists. The prayer flags—

cotton streamers printed with Sanskrit prayers—are intended to flap in the wind to invoke constant prayer. Nearing a meadow called Mera, we found a veritable forest of prayer flags and shrines. Clearly, Mera had special significance to pilgrims. Staring at the crashing waterfalls, deep green pastures and conifer forests encircled by a fringe of icy peaks, it was easy to imagine why. If a legendary paradise like Eden or Shambala ever existed, it must surely have resembled this valley.

'What is the importance of this place?', I asked old Nima Tenzing, one of our staff. Nima was a sprightly 65-year-old Sherpa from the Everest region, who'd made a career of assisting expeditions since the early British explorations in the 1950s.

Nima pointed to the 1,000 metre cliff on our left. About 800 metres up the 80° wall of granite slabs covered with moss and grass, a huge, triangular rock wedge had fallen away and produced a cave. Through a fracture in the cave's ceiling, a subterranean spring spat a column of water on to a rocky floor.

'The caves of Shiva and Parvati', Nima explained.

'A holy place?'

'Oh yes, very holy. Pilgrim place.'

'You mean pilgrims walk all the way up



here and climb this cliff to get to that cave?"

He nodded.

The great Lord Shiva, god of destruction and rebirth, is the supreme god of the ancient Hindu scriptures; Parvati, the Mother Goddess, is his wife. Together they are the most powerful and divine of the Hindu gods, worshipped in every Hindu community.

"What's in the cave?", I asked Nima.

He shrugged. Though he'd passed this way before, he'd never made the pilgrimage. He put my question to the passing porters who'd paused, as we had, to stare at the play of sunlight on the glistening, seemingly free-standing waterspout at the cave's mouth. None of them had been there either, but one had heard that in the cave was a shrine paved with precious stones. Another claimed that crystals as big as fists hung from the ceiling. Yet another told us the story of a rogue who tried to steal a ruby from the shrine and fell to his death on the descent: "Great powers protect the shrine", I was warned.

Suddenly three toothless old Hindu women appeared. Barefoot and ragged, holding rain-shields of woven straw over their heads, they chatted with Nima. By now several of our group had gathered around the old women, including Sharu,

an Indian member of the expedition who spoke with them in Hindi.

"They have been to Shiva's and Parvati's caves!", Sharu announced incredulously.

I looked toward the cave. I could see no track, nor any safe route through the network of vegetated slopes, waterfalls and patches of smooth rock. That these grandmothers had clambered up sod walls and cliffs was more than I could swallow, but the old women insisted that on the previous day they'd made the pilgrimage.

Sharu quizzed them. They'd walked from Khanbari, a week away, and had begun their pilgrimage by bathing in the sacred lake beneath Makalu, two days up river from where we stood. They'd then walked down the track and climbed to the caves of Shiva and Parvati. Again, we asked what was in the caves. Again, their answers compounded the atmosphere of mystery.

"They say there are two caves, each containing a shrine full of the offerings of many pilgrims—piles of coins, crystals, statues of the gods and the like", said Sharu. "A hermit guards the caves, and if we go up we must bring money so the hermit can make an offering for us."

"Someone lives up there?", I asked sceptically.

"So they say."

"But where did they climb up the cliff?"

We were told that there were two paths, one difficult, one longer but easier. If we wanted to, we'd find a path, one old woman explained.

The trio marched off down the track, leaving us wondering. I stared at the cave again. Either a lot of pilgrims' bones were at the foot of the wall or, I felt sure, the old women were spinning us a tale. After all, Nepal is the home of the yeti, which seems to exist more in the imagination than in the flesh.

"Is it true, Nima?"

"Oh, yes. After Makalu we go up!"

"But you are a Buddhist man, and this is a Hindu place."

Nima shrugged, and inscribed a circle in the air with his two hands.

"It is all one", he said.

Weeks passed as we tried, and failed, to climb the 8,481 metre Makalu. Himalayan mountaineering is something of a pilgrimage in itself, an arduous personal journey where one pushes oneself to physical and mental extremes unattainable within the daily grind of our home lives. Perils confront all pilgrims. One of our members, Rick Allen, nearly did not return from Makalu after tumbling 500 metres down the mountain from a height of 7,900 metres in an avalanche; he was lucky to escape with minor injuries and a little frost-bite. After the drama of rescuing Rick and getting him out by helicopter, the raging winds of October set in and our progress on the mountain ground to a halt. By mid-October we'd quit Makalu and were again camped

beneath the sacred cave, on our way home.

Emerging from my tent to a cobalt-blue sky, I was handed a cup of tea by Nima, who wore his canteen buckled round his waist and held his ski-pole walking stick at the ready, evidently anticipating a major walk. "We go up?", he asked. Remembering Nima's two-month-old suggestion that we make the pilgrimage to Shiva's and Parvati's caves, I grabbed my camera and a ski pole. Though weeks of humping rucksacks up and down Makalu had left us weary, I knew that we'd never cease to wonder about the tales of shrines and the hermit guardian on the cliffs above unless we made the pilgrimage.

Nima had arranged that our cook, Pasang, and Pasang Ongde, a porter from the village of Waleng, would search out the path up the imposing wall. Behind them would follow my expedition companions Doug Scott, Sharu Prabhu, our Scottish doctor Brian McGowan, and I. Thus our pantheistic pilgrimage



included three Nepali Buddhists, an Indian Hindu, an aspiring English Buddhist, and a Scot and an Australian of indeterminate persuasion.

Pasang led past mounds of yak dung and fluttering prayer flags to the foot of the wall where a narrow trail, hidden till we reached it, suddenly appeared. Craning our necks upward, we saw the path—well-worn steps kicked into high-angled turf, weaving between waterfalls and rock slabs—disappear far above. Pasang turned, smiled broadly, and declared that we had solved the first problem of the pilgrimage: we had found the way.



As I climbed, it occurred to me that this was not the first pilgrimage I'd made to a sacred site of Shiva. In 1981, Doug and I had walked beyond the town of Gangotri in the Indian Garwhal Himalaya to the source of an arm of the Ganges—a place called Gomukh, where the Gangotri Glacier terminates in an ice wall and spits out the Bhagirathi River. Along the way we'd met many pilgrims, whose mission was to bathe in the frigid waters at Gomukh and cleanse themselves of sin in preparation for the

afterlife. Most Hindu pilgrimages are difficult and sometimes dangerous journeys to the sources of rivers—mountain lakes and glaciers—and on that especially holy trail I was intrigued by the constant flow of people, some so old and sick they had to be carried.

We intended to scale an unclimbed ridge on Shivling, a 6,550 metre peak named after Lord Shiva himself. Our plans excited the pilgrims, who assured us that we too were pilgrims and that it was our destiny to reach the summit of Shivling.

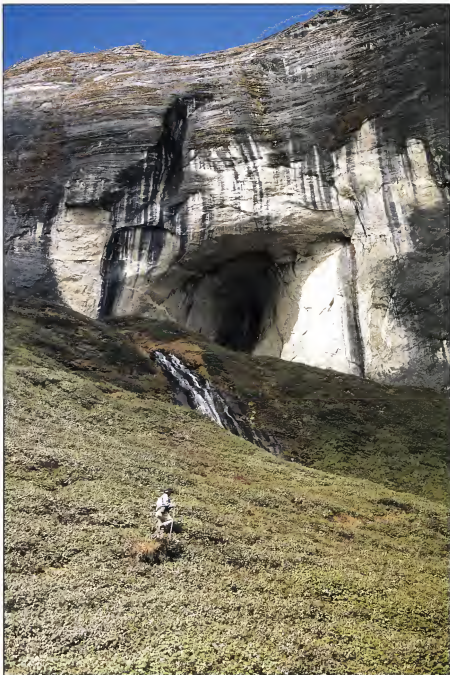
Turbaned gurus, wild-haired yogis and saffron-robed siddhus joined us on the track, and each one begged for a few rupees to help him along the road to piety and enlightenment. Among our group was the famous British climber Don Whillans. Strolling along the track, Don rounded a bend and encountered a gaunt, ash-covered yogi. All around us was rubble; at an altitude of nearly 4,000 metres, nights were bitterly cold. Even so, the yogi wore nothing but a loincloth and carried little more than a brass pot of Ganges water. Whillans and the yogi stared at each other for a moment, then the yogi raised his open palm to receive a coin. 'Hmm', said Whillans, 'are you on some sort of sponsored walk?'. He then grasped the yogi's hand firmly and shook it, utterly confounding the Indian.

Like the trek to Shivling, the journey to the caves of Shiva and Parvati is essentially a Hindu pilgrimage. But, because Hinduism and Buddhism have co-existed for 3,000 years, the adherents of each religion recognize the holy sites of the other. Hence the enthusiasm of our Buddhist friends climbing ahead of us. Such had been the case at Shivling Base Camp, too. There, on the meadow called Tapoban, our neighbours comprised hermits of both religions who inhabited caves dug into a boulder field. Their separate mythologies and scriptures have a common geography.

Shared pilgrimages occur frequently in the Himalayas. Another example is Mt Kailas, a 6,030 metre peak on the cold, dry Tibetan plateau atop which, Hindu mythology states, sits Shiva's throne. The streams originating around Mt Kailas feed the Ganges, and in Hindu myth are said to be the matted braids of Shiva's hair. Buddhists also regard Mt Kailas as a holy site, believing it to be the physical and metaphoric centre of the world. A Buddhist pilgrimage to Mt Kailas entails a 'parikrama', or 50 kilometre circumambulation of the mountain, throughout which pilgrims meditate on the cycle of life and death. Truly devout Tibetan Buddhists may even make the journey prostrating themselves on hands and knees every step of the way.



There came a time on the climb to Shiva's cave when I began seriously to consider bailing out. The path headed up



Above, Nima Terzing on the climb to Shiva's cave.

a vertical rock rib with waterfalls crashing to either side, and I worried that Pasang's decision to take the more direct but difficult upward path and descend by the easier route was a mistake. It only needed a moment's thought, however, to see the method in Pasang's apparent madness. By choosing the difficult path, we were acting out a Buddhist metaphor: the fast, direct, but difficult and hazardous route—like the Buddhist road to enlightenment called 'Hinayana'—would lead us to our goal more quickly than the longer, more methodical route prescribed by Mahayana Buddhism.

We'd grasped our way up some 300 metres of muddy sod and boulder-choked gully when the wall steepened into a 12 metre cliff. Nima had nearly

slipped on a rock slab lower down, and I didn't like the prospect of my wet boots adhering to this blank-looking bit of rock.

'We should have brought ropes and climbing gear', I suggested to Doug. I felt that the path had become too dangerous. Then out of the corner of my eye I saw Pasang Ongde saunter barefooted up the slab. Pasang followed in sneakers which were losing their soles, then Nima. Standing on top, Pasang leaned over and offered his hand to Brian, a dangerously fearless non-climber, whose scuffling shoes sent shivers up and down my spine. With the non-climbers on top, there was no choice for the climbers but to follow. Hyperventilating with nervous tension, I teetered up on smooth granite and flexing handholds of sod, trying to blot out the view of the unbroken drop to the valley floor.

Pasang grinned at me. 'This Nepali climbing expedition.'

'Lead on,' I said humbly, traversing off in Pasang's footsteps to yet another rock-band. Again, the Nepali cruised over the slab and waited for us. Leaning over the precipice and by now as cocky as they come, he spied an easier way off to the side and recommended we follow it. 'That way for yaks,' he said, then took off, chuckling to himself.

It was ironic. After seventeen years of technical rockclimbing and nine years of Himalayan mountaineering, I considered myself a reasonably good climber. Now here, in Pasang and Pasang Ongde, were two guys who could literally climb circles around me, yet had never 'climbed' in their lives. When 65-year-old Nima breezed up the slope, I decided to revise my perception of myself as a climber.

Three hours after we set off, the angle of the climb relented and Shiva's cave came into view. As we clawed up the final shrubby slope, I was filled with a strange excitement—the same light feeling in the chest I'd noticed whenever I reached a mountain summit.

The first hint of the shrine was a boulder surrounded by prayer flags. A clear spring trickled out of a split in the

rock, and stuffed inside it lay fistfuls of rupees. We continued till we stood before the gaping, yellow-walled cavern.

The cave, shaped like a natural cathedral, was far bigger than I'd imagined. Its roof stood 150 metres off the rubble floor, while the entrance spanned 120 metres across; its deepest recess lay 100 metres into the rock; out of the ceiling gushed a dancing curtain of water.

Our Nepali friends strode quickly toward the waterfall, stood in its midst, clasped their hands in prayer, and chanted softly to themselves while the water flowed over them. The sound of their chanting and the patter of the waterfall filled the cave. Those minutes as Nima, Pasang and Pasang Ongde let us observe the ritual of their prayer were deeply moving.

We climbed into the cave to a site marked by prayer flags. There was no hermit, nor any jewel-studded shrine, but what we found was a treasure none the less. Set among the rocks, covered in the dusts of time, were layers of ritual objects: brass statuettes of Shiva and Parvati; pots, oil lamps and bells; a conch-horn from the sea; rotting prayer flags and parchment scriptures; rusting tridents that symbolized the Hindu trinity of Brahma the creator, Vishnu the preserver and Shiva the destroyer. Around these lay offerings: coins, kukris (the curved knives carried by the Nepali), jagged lumps of quartz, incense sticks, candles, juniper boughs, faded flowers, and the remains of likenesses of the gods, shaped from dough.

Spiritually purified by the waters, Nima 'made puja', or gave offerings to the gods. He lit several oil lamps and incense sticks and sparked a fire of juniper, the rising smoke suggesting ascent toward heaven. While we left offerings of food and coins, Pasang took up the conch and blew a long, deep note that echoed down the lonely, green valley.

Looking at the meandering Barun River framed by the mouth of the cave, and the waterfall splashing before us, I wondered to myself who had first discovered this remote place, when, and why.

Who came first, and when, we can probably never know. Hindus have inhabited the lower valleys for thousands of years, but in the mountains near Tibet the population is Buddhist. Perhaps, one spring or late autumn long ago, a Hindu pilgrim had walked up the valley and glanced toward the cave in which we stood. In chilly spring or autumn he would have seen, as anyone would at that season, a tall stalagmite of ice formed by the dripping waterfall. To us this would signify just so much ice, but the pilgrim would have interpreted it as a natural manifestation of Shiva in the form of a 'linga'—literally, a phallus of ice. Hindu mythology regards the linga

as representative of Shiva, and every temple to Shiva has a linga as its central point of worship. This dome or column stands for the axis of existence, while the chamber containing the linga symbolizes the womb of Parvati, the life-giving goddess. So, standing in the cave, we were in a natural temple of the supreme god and of creation itself.

The ice linga that would form again within a few weeks, as winter set in, is one of several natural, 'self-born' lingas found in the Himalayas. They may be mountains like Shivering (its name a contraction from 'Shiva's linga'), rock pinnacles, or domes of ice. Perhaps the most famous ice linga stands at Amarnath in Kashmir, 4,000 metres up in the mountains above the Sind valley. Every year, thousands of Hindus make a 47 kilometre pilgrimage from the village of Pahlgam, north of Srinagar, to a cave where water seeps and forms an ice dome. Pilgrims making this journey brave blizzards and the rigours of altitude, but to die on a pilgrimage, they believe, assures one of a better life to come.

The time came to leave Shiva's cave. We sidled along a narrow ledge above a precipice and reached Parvati's cave. As the sun neared the horizon our Nepali friends performed a brief ritual before we descended, treading fearfully down the wall, crossing splashing waterfalls and lowering ourselves down cliffs on the roots of plants.

On the meadow we felt the serenity that follows a safe return from a dangerous journey. I knew I'd always count the pilgrimage to Shiva's and Parvati's caves among the best climbs of my life. For a while I even wondered whether the weeks of cold fingers and toes on Makalu had been merely a diversion, and this the real objective of the expedition. After all, pilgrimages are predestined experiences, so the Hindus believe.

Rejoining our friends who'd spent the day lazing at Mera and watching us on the wall, we were asked what we'd found. 'A fantastic shrine full of crystals, coins, statues and priceless objects', I replied, echoing the old Hindu woman who'd fired our curiosity two months earlier.

Mystery, myth and mysticism had been woven together that day into a strong braid which united as pilgrims those of us who'd climbed to the two caves. I told our friends nothing more of what we'd found. To unravel and explain the mystery strand by strand would miss the point of the pilgrimage; it isn't what you find at the end, but what you learn along the way. ▲

Greg Child was interviewed in Wild no 37. A native Sydneysider, he is married to an American, Sally Oberlin, and now resides for much of the year in Seattle, Washington. He is a leading Himalayan mountaineer and rockclimber; he and Greg Mortimer recently became the first Australians to climb K2 (8,611 metres). As well, Greg Child is author of many published stories and articles and a highly acclaimed book, *Thin Air: Encounters in the Himalayas*.

Makalu Region





KUBLA KHAN

A trip through two of Tasmania's most spectacular caves, with Andrew Briggs

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan

A stately pleasure dome decree:

Where Alph, the sacred river, ran

Through caverns measureless to man

Down to a sunless sea.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge,

'Kubla Khan', 1797

▲ TASMANIA BOASTS SPECTACULAR scenery above and below ground—both rugged mountains and richly decorated caves. Its beautiful caverns attract less publicity than the more readily accessible ranges. Among those in the know, however, Tasmania's caves are highly regarded. Although a large number deserve mention, Kubla Khan and Croesus Caves are among the best. They are not as severe a test of skill and stamina as many, but they contain some of the most outstanding cave decoration found in Australia.

Kubla Khan and Croesus are both located near Mole Creek, a rural community in the north of Tasmania which derives its name from the subterranean nature of the creek that flows through the township. The caves at Mole Creek occur within Gordon limestone, which was laid down during the Ordovician Period, approximately 500 million years ago. They have been formed by the solvent action of water entering the limestone through joints or cracks in its surface. This water is rich in dissolved carbon dioxide and, as a result, is slightly acidic and capable of dissolving small quantities of the limestone (calcium carbonate). Solution tubes are formed, allowing small streams to pass through the rock. These streams further erode the limestone to form the passages and chambers of the

cave. Secondary action by the carbon-dioxide-rich water deposits calcite to make the formations—called speleothems—which will decorate the newly formed caverns.

The vast array of speleothems includes stalactites, stalagmites, flowstone, shawls and helictites. Stalactites hang from the ceiling of the cave, while stalagmites grow up from the floor. When they join, a column is formed. Flowstone is created when a film of water runs over a large area and deposits calcite as it passes. Colourful shawls are formed when small trickles of water pass down a crevice, eventually leaving behind a thin sheet of calcite. Many shawls twist and fold as they follow the original path of the water. The formation of helictites remains a mystery; their weird and intricately woven displays often seem to defy gravity, with fragile limbs pointing in all directions.

Kubla Khan and Croesus are the best-known caves in the Mole Creek area. Both contain outstanding speleothems; yet they are totally different in nature.

Kubla Khan Cave was probably discovered in the late 1800s by local landowners. Exploration did not begin until 1948, when the Tasmanian Caverneering Club first entered the cave. Early explorers had to battle deep water and steep climbs before they were able to reach the innermost chambers. Modern caverneering techniques and equipment, and a second entrance which was found in 1970 have made access somewhat easier than in the early days. The popular through-trip from the top to the bottom entrance can be accomplished in about eight hours, allowing time for photography.

The most outstanding features of the cave are: a massive area of flowstone and rim pools known as the Pleasure Dome; a 17 metre high stalagmite called the Khan; and a huge, 24 metre high column—the Begum. The Khan and the Begum are both located in the massive Xanadu chamber, which is approximately 200 metres long, 50 metres wide and 30 metres high. Nearby, in another large chamber, a single row of over 100



Right, helictites of staggering beauty and intricacy abound in Kubla Khan Cave. The best examples are found in the Opium Den and in passages leading to the Forbidden City chamber. Left, curtains of stalactites and stalagmites grace the walls of the Forbidden City chamber in Kubla Khan Cave. All photos Andrew Briggs

AND CROESUS

stalagmites has been called the Khan's Army. Altogether, Kubla Khan has two and a half kilometres of passages, most of them well decorated with speleothems. Kubla Khan Cave Reserve, declared in 1982 as part of an effort to protect this magnificent cave, also encompasses the smaller Ghengis Khan Cave with its splendid display of helictites.

A trip through Kubla Khan is a memorable experience. It is not for the faint-hearted, since the route is both difficult and dangerous. A 30 metre rope or caving ladder must first be lowered into the bottom entrance and left in place to enable a group to exit from the cave. Descent into the Opium Den from the top entrance is straightforward, the final pitch being a 20 metre abseil down a flowstone wall. The Opium Den displays an amazing collection of crazed helictites, and more helictites appear before the Forbidden City chamber is

reached. This contains the Khan's Army as well as numerous decorative shawls and flowstone curtains. Some time is usually spent photographing this amazing chamber before continuing through the cave. Next stop is the rocky perch which overlooks the massive Xanadu chamber, where the Khan and the Begum dominate all. A small passage partly hidden by the Khan reveals the way on. This passage requires careful navigation and some difficult scrambling before Cairn Hall is eventually gained. A 15 metre rope is needed for a descent to the river Alph; it is then a simple matter to climb from the stream up to the Pleasure Dome. Boots should be removed here in order to preserve the delicate flowstone. The entire floor of the Pleasure Dome is covered in rimstone dams and intricate gour pools, and the chamber is as spectacular as any other part of the cave. The final and most challenging



Above: the Xanadu chamber of Kubla Khan is 200 metres long and 50 metres wide and contains the Khan and the Begum—at least one of which formations which has held a special attraction for generations of wide-eyed cavers! **Left:** a caver pauses to reflect on (in?) the Jade Pool, another well-known, but less dramatic, feature of Kubla Khan Cave.



Tasmania's Caves





portion of the trip through Kubla Khan is the stream passage of the river Alph. One tricky section—a climb poised five metres above the active stream—has been called the Stalactite Shuffle. One slip here usually means a swim! Fortunately, the stream passage is only 200 metres long and the bottom entrance is gained with relative ease. Once up this last pitch, the short downhill walk back to the car-park offers a welcome respite from the rigours of the cave.

The two kilometres of passages in Croesus Cave also contain a diverse collection of speleothems. The cave was discovered in 1896, but detailed exploration was first undertaken as recently as 1947 by the Tasmanian Caverning Club. The most notable feature of the cave is the Golden Stairway, a gently terraced slope of ascending rimstone pools. Croesus Cave is much more readily accessible than Kubla Khan and can be visited without the aid of ropes or ladders. The only obstacle to the visitor is the stream that flows out of the cave. This passes over a series of rimstone dams which

form deep pools that must either be waded, or avoided by carefully climbing round them. Most of the main passage of the cave is at least 10 metres high and 15 metres wide. Much of this passage is well decorated with shawls and flowstone. These formations combine with the rimstone dams found throughout the cave to make Croesus one of the finest stream caves in Australia. A photographic trip to its far end usually takes about two hours and is a welcome change from the other, more demanding, caves in the Mole Creek area. A locked gate restricts access. The Croesus Cave Reserve, declared in 1972, also includes the beautiful Lynds Cave, which is about a kilometre long. It, too, contains a wide variety of spectacular decorations.

Access to Kubla Khan and Croesus Cave Reserves is controlled by a permit system administered by the Tasmanian Department of Parks, Wildlife and Heritage. In addition, the entrances to Croesus, Kubla Khan and Ghengis Khan have been fitted with locked gates. These restrictions enable the department to maintain records on all the caves

in the reserves, and serve to protect them from vandalism.

The future for Kubla Khan and Croesus is uncertain. At present no permits are being issued and access has been further restricted until a pilot study into the caves' future management is completed. Caving clubs and other interested parties have been invited to make submissions to the study. Alternatives include the imposition of more severe restrictions on access, the continuation of present controls, or the opening of the caves to the general public. Kubla Khan and Croesus in particular would be excellent tourist drawcards as they are among the best-decorated caves to be found anywhere in Australia.

Conservation is the key to the future of these wonderful caves. Uncontrolled logging on the Great Western Tiers above Mole Creek, for example, would do untold damage to all the caves in the area. ▲

Andrew Briggs is an experienced bushwalker and skier from Collinsvale, Tasmania, who has ventured underground regularly—usually armed with a camera—since a trip to Vanishing Falls in that State's south-west more than ten years ago.

Wild Ski Touring

Tough

TELES

Challenging terrain for tourers and Telemark skiers on the other side of the Tasman, by *David Humphries*





▲ SOME TIME AFTER THE THIRD OR fourth stiff drink, skiing in Australia can begin to seem a little boring. Not just the downhill skiing—you probably tired of that after a weekend at Perisher with 20,000 people and without snow. No, alas, even Telemarking has lost some of its thrill. You have conquered the chutes of Watsons Crag, blown away the 'fat-boarders' struggling in the bumps at resorts, and skied backwards on Bulgarian racing sticks from Katoomba to Kiandra in a mere 12 hours, dressed only in lurex socks and a streamlined jockstrap. The time has come for some *serious* skiing, preferably at minimal cost.

Our cousins across the Tasman get a wild look in their eyes when they talk about skiing. They speak of steep, deep and wild—and that's only the beginners' run at the local downhill resort. In New Zealand, the Telemark tough guys ski in the wilderness, in areas such as Mt Cook and Westland National Parks.

Though hardly a patch on the 1990 season, 1987 was a good year for snow in Australia. It was only 'so-so' in New Zealand. Naturally, that year I went to New Zealand. I had previously done some low-key mountaineering in Mt Cook National Park in the heart of the South Island. Consequently, this region was the natural choice for my first venture on skis into the snowy high country.

Mt Cook village is a pleasant place and caters well for all budgets. The prices in the Hermitage, a high-class hotel, will knock you back on your heels. These, however, are aimed essentially at

Japanese and American visitors to the area. Do not despair; cheap accommodation can be found both at the Youth Hostel and at the Hermitage Chalets, where a four-bed chalet with cooking facilities costs about \$50 a night. For the truly impoverished, the new bus shelter is fully enclosed and has a hot shower. The local store is remarkably well stocked, and last-minute purchases of gear can be made at the Alpine Guides shop.

It should be made absolutely clear that venturing into the high country around Mt Cook is not for the inexperienced or ill-equipped. Indeed, for much of the time only an idiot would consider touring in this region. At least one person was killed by an avalanche during the 1987 winter season; he was experienced, and was travelling at a relatively safe time.

At the very least, safe travel here requires skill in avalanche forecasting, crevasse rescue, snow survival and route-finding. Equipment must include ropes, self-rescue gear, avalanche transceivers, and a selection of spare parts and repair materials, as well as appropriate clothing. This is no terrain for Lycra suits or nylon wind-breakers.

If you don't have the necessary skills or equipment, don't be put off. Experienced guides and suitable gear can be hired. A good guide is worth far more than his or her daily fee; consider the alternative of being shipped home in a box!

Which brings me to ski gear. Although ski mountaineering gear—modelled on alpine ski equipment but with a heel

Above, New Zealand alpine accommodation is definitely 'a room with a view'—Tasman Saddle Hut is just visible on top of the rock spire. Ross Pearson. Left, this straining skier is dwarfed by Mt Sefton's mighty East Face. Andrew Brookes

binding which can be unlocked—is popular, it has many disadvantages in comparison with a solid set of Telemark gear. It is heavier and more prone to binding failures (which you can't fix); and skins, or something similar, are obligatory. I also found that deep, breakable crust, which is not uncommon in the high country of New Zealand, is much easier to handle on Telemarks. Two of my companions had good ski mountaineering gear, but eight centimetres of breakable crust over half a metre of heavy powder made their lives a misery; those of us on Telemarks found it only moderately unpleasant. Alpine techniques require a certain amount of up-and-down movement, which necessitates breaking through the crust; by contrast, Telemarking is essentially a backwards-and-forwards movement, and if one uses shins and knees as crust breakers, slow stable turns are possible even with a 25 kilogram pack. I should point out that extremely icy conditions occur at times in New Zealand, though probably not to the same extent as in Australia. These present difficulties on all types of skis, and great caution must be exercised on steep, icy slopes—particularly when crevasses lurk at the bottom.

All ski equipment has good and bad points. Provided your skis are sturdy, and have steel edges and heavy-duty

bindings (with or without cables or plates), they will suffice.

Before you set out, notify park staff of your intentions; on your return, let them know you are safe. Up-to-date information on weather and avalanche conditions is always available at park headquarters, and a daily report on the same conditions is broadcast to all the high huts. Fortunately, the Kiwis have a

Once organized, the question is where to go. For those making their first trip afield, Mueller Hut, above the village, is a good option provided avalanche risk is low. Its main drawback is a steep climb of around 1,500 metres, which will take from three to six hours depending on snow conditions. Mueller Hut is perched on the ridge overlooking the main valley, and is a comfortable base for tours to Mt Sealy and beyond. For those still finding their ski legs, a large, gently angled basin lies outside the front door; and crevasses are generally hard to find.

If you are keen to tackle harder slopes, the most accessible area is the upper Tasman Glacier. To get up the Tasman on skis takes most people two days of hard work, with an overnight stop at either Beetham or De la Beche Hut. Alternatively, one can catch a 'back flight' in a ski plane to Darwin Corner, about four hours' climb below Tasman Saddle Hut. These shuttle flights for the downhill ski excursions on the Tasman Glacier run by Alpine Guides are relatively inexpensive. It is also possible to organize charter flights to a number of other destinations in both Mt Cook and Westland National Parks, but this is not cheap.

Tasman Saddle Hut is situated on a rock ridge with unbelievable views. The drop on either side of hundreds of metres poses a serious threat to sleepwalkers. From here you can ski the upper névé, gaining access from Mt Aylmer or Hochstetter Dom. Below the hut is a relatively stable area of ice falls, and the cornices, crevasses, seracs and caves provide a maze of skiing delights. However, care should always be taken below ice falls. I

crossed one old fall which was about a kilometre long and 400 metres wide and had pieces of ice the size of the average lounge room scattered over its entire length.

Steeper chutes beckon near Mt Green and on the northern side of the Tasman névé. One can cross from the Tasman into the head of the Murchison Glacier—a spectacular trip, unfortunately marred by a number of risky avalanche runouts. The views from Mt Aylmer towards the western ranges are inspiring, but the winds are strong and bitterly cold. Gore-Tex takes on the rigidity of corrugated iron, and the cold is a source of unexpected dental hazards. After standing on this ridge for 15 minutes, I struck myself lightly on a front tooth with a stock handle. The tooth had frozen, and it shattered, resulting in considerable discomfort over the next couple of days. Incidentally, quite a serviceable dental bridge can be made from chewing gum and strapping tape.

Although a number of return routes exist, the most direct (other than catching another plane) is back down the Tasman Glacier. In all, this usually involves rather more than 20 kilometres of skiing, then a stiff walk back to the village—unless you are lucky enough to bump into a stray tourist or friendly guide in a four-wheel drive. Although I have managed it in eight hours, I suggest that the trip down the Tasman Glacier be made over two days since much of the skiing on the glacier is flat and tiring. Furthermore, the most dangerous part of the trip is the ascent of the dreaded moraine wall to Ball Hut Road. In a one-day push, this would come at the end of eight hours' solid skiing for most tourists—hardly the time to attempt an unpleasant and dangerous climb up rubble loosely held in place by ice and snow. Allowing two days permits travel at a more pleasant pace, with time to make side excursions.

Of course, there are many other parts of the South Island where good ski touring can be had. The Pisa Ranges near Wanaka are of a more gentle, rolling nature; privately guided tours can be arranged here. Westland National Park, on the western side of the Southern Alps, contains challenging country for ski touring in the vicinity of the Fox and Franz Josef névés. Pioneer Hut is a useful base.

The best time of the year to go ski touring in New Zealand is spring, when the weather is more stable and the avalanche danger considerably less than in winter. All the same, it remains a relatively serious undertaking. Only one question remains: why go at all? The answer, of course, is the mountains—the stark, magnificent, enduring mountains. ▲

David Humphries enjoys almost anything to do with mountains. He has walked, skied and climbed among them for many years, and in his younger days fell off them from time to time. This experience led him to medical school, and he now runs a clinic specializing in the treatment of sporting injuries.



Above, good skiing abounds near Mt Sealy. Ross Pearson

superb system of huts, making travel infinitely safer and more comfortable than in Australia. Most are equipped with beds, cooking facilities, lights and two-way radios. Unlike Australia's mountain huts, they are constantly being upgraded and added to. The latest hut, on the edge of the Tasman névé, is a solar-powered masterpiece in a beautiful setting. Hut fees are about \$10 a night, a small price when you are cold and exhausted. They are payable on your return to Mt Cook village, and are based on daily radio reports of your position.

Mt Cook Area





Conservation ORGANIZATIONS

Australia's environmental armies—a *Wild* survey

▲ AS THE WAVE OF GREEN EUPHORIA RECEDES, THE thrill of electoral success in many parts of Australia gives way to harsh political reality. Just as it always has—though perhaps more urgently now than ever—the wild environment needs protection. It often seems that as individuals there is little we can do to help, beyond making our own impact on the natural world as benign as possible. Fortunately, we need not act alone. The environment is not faced so much with new threats as with old ones recycled. People concerned for the environment came together in the face of the old threats, and used their collective strength to mount effective opposition. Many of the organizations they formed still survive.

Some achieved their initial goal and subsequently broadened their scope. The Wilderness Society, for example, grew out of the campaign to save the Franklin River in the 1970s and early 1980s. It now campaigns in every State on local and national issues and takes an interest in international matters as well. Other groups continue to fight old battles against opponents just as enduring, and usually do so at a huge material disadvantage. John Sinclair, who founded the Fraser Island Defenders Organization nearly 20 years ago, noted in his reply to our request for information: 'Like most organizations, *Wild* has little appreciation of the priorities and limited resources of voluntary conservation groups. This survey has taken over an hour to complete at a time when all of our resources are greatly needed...'

This survey lists the major national conservation organizations and a representative sample of those whose focus and membership are more localized. It lets each organization describe, more or less in its own words, 'where it is coming from'; it lists their achievements as they perceive them and their aims for the future; it gives an outline of the resources of each one, its style of organization and operation,



Above, one of the greatest Australian conservation victories was the preventing of the damming of Tasmania's Franklin River. Wilderness Society. Left, Fraser Island Defenders Organization leader for 20 years, John Sinclair. FIDO



and what it costs to join. Contact names and addresses are provided for as many States and Territories as possible, to enable you to get in touch. The best way to appreciate the more detailed workings of any such group is to become involved. Membership of one of the organizations surveyed here, or enquiries made through them, may lead you to one of the many smaller groups with particular interests.

Even when effectively organized, conservationists face a daunting task: the pressures on the environment are many and relentless. As the representative of Friends of the Earth (Fitzroy) who answered our questions put it, 'You win a few; you lose a lot'. It's an unequal and a never-ending battle. We take our hats off to those who are prepared to fight it. ▲



Wild Survey Conservation Organizations

Other branches (spokesperson)	Approximate membership	Acronym	Statement of philosophy	Programme of campaigns and activities	Organization structure
Australian Conservation Foundation , 340 Gore St, Fitzroy, Vic 3005, phone (03) 416 1455, fax (03) 416 1573 (Philip Taylor: Executive Director; Karen Anderson: Environment Manager) Established 1963	22,000	ACF	A non-profit organization working to promote an ecologically sustainable future, in which the integrity of the biosphere is maintained, a full range of genetic species and environmental diversity is maintained, human population numbers are stabilized, resources are managed in a manner which maximizes options for future generations, environmental and economic planning are integrated, there is equity and social justice for all	Biodiversity (threatened rain forests, endangered species), natural resources (land care, land degradation), global change (ozone depletion, greenhouse)	Elected council of 35 members, president elected by council. Employed staff and volunteers responsible to executive director, who is responsible to council
Campaign to Save Native Forests (Perth Rainforest Action Group), c/- Environment Centre, 794 Hey St, Perth, WA 6000, phone (09) 321 2269, fax (09) 322 3045 Established 1975	200	CSNF	Aims to protect rain forests, promote sustainable agro forestry, protect forest dwellers, and achieve appropriate forest management and conservation	Rain forests, especially South-east Asia (opposition to destructive practices), forests of south-western Australia	A consensus structure with no formal membership requirements
East Opposed Coalition , 1st Floor, 247 Finders Lane, Melbourne, Vic 3000, phone (03) 650 8011, fax (03) 650 5684 Established 1983	800	EOC	To protect the National Estate (and potential World Heritage) forests of East Gippsland by raising public awareness and empowering people to take action. To change the operations of the timber industry in East Gippsland so that it is environmentally responsible and produces high value user-timber products. In the long term, to move logging in Victoria from native forests to plantations	East Gippsland forest campaign	Staff responsible to committee, whose members are the core of the EOC volunteer base. All decisions by consensus
Fraser Island Defenders Organization Limited , PO Box 321, West End, Qld 4101, phone (07) 870 2620 (John Sinclair: Jn President) phone (07) 371 5323, (Mike Weil: Vice President) Established 1971	400	FIOD (The Watchdog of Fraser Island)	A watchdog organization monitoring all aspects of use and management of Fraser Island, an advocate for the widest use of the natural resources of this great natural wonder of the world. The calls for the creation of a National Park and World Heritage listing to exclude incompatible activities	World Heritage listing for Fraser Island, National Park status for the Great Sandy Region, to preclude logging and mining, research and education	Company limited by public guarantee, 7 persons Brisbane-based executive provides administrative and organizational leadership. Policy development by Honorary Project Officer, John Sinclair
Friends of the Earth (Fitzroy) , 222 Brunswick St, Fitzroy, Vic 3005, phone (03) 419 8700, fax (03) 416 2081 (Cam Walker: National Liaison Officer) Established 1974	4,500 (2,300 Fitzroy)	FOE	A grass-roots organization working to achieve a more just, equitable society. Operates on a non-hierarchical, non-sect basis. Aims to create alternative institutions	Anti uranium (Roxby Downs); greenhouse/climate; transport (bicycles, public transport); hazardous chemicals, recycling (paper, deposit legislation); food safety, mineral sands mining	8 campaign collectives, each represented on central strategy collective; decisions by consensus
Greenpeace Australia Limited , PO Box 51, Balmain, NSW 2041, phone (02) 555 7944, fax (02) 555 7154 (Paul Gilding: Executive Director) Established 1978	50,000	Greenpeace	We must be saved by non-violent confrontations and by what the Quakers call 'bearing witness'. A person bearing witness must accept responsibility for being aware of an injustice. That person may then choose to do something or stand by, but they will not turn away in ignorance. The Greenpeace ethic is not only personally to bear witness to injustices against life, it is to take direct action to prevent them. While action must be direct, it must also be non-violent. We must disturb a wrong without offering personal violence to its perpetrators. Our greatest strength must be the faith, and its commitment, to direct our own lives to protect others	Antarctica, atmosphere, toxics, nuclear issues, ocean ecology, wildlife	Company limited by guarantee, with a board of 5 directors (3 women, 2 men)
National Parks Association of New South Wales Incorporated , PO Box 456, Sydney South, NSW 2001, phone (02) 264 7994, fax (02) 264 7160 Established 1957	8,000	NPA	A community organization dedicated to preserving the natural heritage of NSW, proposes new areas for reservation as National Parks; monitors the management of existing reserves; aims to secure special protection for threatened and endangered species; encourages wilderness in the community of conservation issues	Western lands, the edge of the city, forests, endangered species, the threat from mining, saving the shoreline, the Alps	17 semi-autonomous branches elect state 30 representatives to advise council which makes policy and employs staff
National Parks Association of Queensland Incorporated , PO Box 1040, Milton Centre, Qld 4054, phone (07) 870 8080 (George Haddock: Honorary Secretary; Brian Egan: President) Established 1930	1,100	NPAQ	A voluntary body working to secure the reservation of all suitable areas in Queensland as National Parks, to educate its members and the public in respect of the appreciation and use of National Parks. These objectives are pursued by co-operation with and reasoned submissions to the government of the day and relevant authorities	Submissions regarding the declaration and management of National Parks, Fraser Island, Under the Sun, Shrublands Bay, western lands	Elected council of 12, plus immediate past president, association administered by honorary office bearers, guided by elected council, assisted by sub-committees, field outing leaders and volunteers
Rainforest Information Centre , PO Box 368, Lismore, NSW 2480, phone (066) 21 8505, fax (066) 21 8505 Established 1979	2,000	RIC	We are part of the web of life. We are but one strand of it. There is no pyramid effect. The rain forests are the womb of life. The womb of life is the womb of the world's species of plants and animals. They must be protected from humanity	Namada Dam, India, Arunachal reforestation scheme, India, Tobor Damia scheme for sustainable use of natural forest, Ecuador; Waubesa Sewell, PNG; Butterfly Farm, Samoa	Consensus at weekly meeting
The Wilderness Society , 130 Dwyer St, Hobart, Tas 7000, phone (052) 34 5266, fax (052) 25 5112 (Richard Ledger: Interim Director) Established 1978	14,500	TWS	The protection of wilderness and natural areas throughout Australia and overseas	International 'non forests' National campaign for wilderness legislation, National Estate wilderness: Kakadu, and lands State Cape York, Fraser Island, SE forests of NSW, Tasmanian forests, Kimberley	Consensus decision making at twice-yearly national meetings and monthly phone link-ups, open to all members and supporters
Victorian National Parks Association Incorporated , 1st Floor, 247 Finders Lane, Melbourne, Vic 3000, phone (03) 650 8296, fax (03) 650 5684 (Doug Hannum: Director) Established 1962	4,100	VNPA	To promote National Parks and strive for their welfare; to foster public interest in National and State Parks, Flora and Fauna Reserves, other conservation reserves and areas of scientific or historic value; to maintain interest and involvement in land management issues	Research into Victorian parks and land management issues. Campaigns on mining, forestry, wilderness, alpine grazing and resort expansion; grassland, clearing controls on native vegetation. Activities include bushwalking, ski touring, diving and rock-climbing, excursions (bus tours), walks, talks and games. Friends of Parks and Species groups, host to National Threatened Species Network in Victoria	Elected council of 16 members to whom the appointed staff are responsible. Quarterly meetings
Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland , 4th Floor, 180 Edward St, Brisbane, Qld 4000, phone (07) 221 0194, fax (07) 221 0701 (Adrian Jeffrey: Director) Established 1962	1,400	WPSQ	A grass-roots organization working on nature conservation issues in Queensland. Formed by post-jobs Wright, naturalist David Play and publisher Brian Clouston	Cape York Peninsula, Fraser Island, biodiversity, National Parks, environmental legislation	Council of 12 members elected annually
World Wide Fund for Nature Australia , GPO Box 528, Sydney, NSW 2001, phone (02) 361 5572, fax (02) 361 3985 (Don Henry: Director) Established 1978	27,000	WWF Australia	WWF aims to conserve nature and ecological processes through funding for research and educational projects, public awareness and advocacy, policy development and implementation. All work is based on the best scientific information available	Conservation of threatened species, conservation of Australian habitats and ecosystems, international action and co-operation to conserve biological diversity, promoting sustainable utilization of natural resources	A board of trustees with an executive council appointed by the trustees. WWF Australia is a part of the world's largest private conservation organization with national associates or affiliates in 33 countries and over a million supporters worldwide

Organization staff	Approx budget (govt grants)	Regular publications	Other major publications (co-producer)	Other commercial fundraising activities	Major achievements/highlights	Membership categories, annual fee
160 paid staff: executive director and secretary; 7 public awareness officers; membership and fund-raising campaign staff; ACF Enterprises Pty Ltd: marketing, finance and accounts, personnel officer, many volunteers	\$2,775,000 (approx 10%)	Conservation News, monthly Habitat Australia, bi-monthly, colour Wilderness Diary National Australia Diary journals	Antarctica: Our Last Great Wilderness, book by Geoff Mosley Green Consumer Guide, book (Penguin) The Green Cleaner, book by Barbara Lord (S & W Books) The Wood and the Trees, book by John Cameron and Anne Perna	Direct mail appeals, luncheons with speakers, comedy festivals	Protection and listing of World Heritage Areas including South-west Tasmania, Wet Tropics, Kakadu (Incorporated) National Park and National Estate status for ecologically important areas including East Gippsland, Malheur, Fraser Island, increased awareness of and involvement in environmental issues among politicians and public	Normal \$35 Concession \$17.50 incl. Habitat subscription \$63 Concession incl. Habitat \$45.00 Life membership \$1,000
All voluntary	Information not available	Newsletter	Forests on Foot, book	Walks, camps, trails		Normal \$20 Concession \$10 Family \$25
Full-time campaign and policy officer, part-time co-ordinator, fund-raiser, finance officer, many volunteers	\$170,000 (less than 10%)	East Gippsland Coalition News, bi-monthly	Timber Harvesting in National Estate Forests in East Gippsland, report by James Pittcock	Appeals: merchandising, special events	May 1988 declaration of National Park to protect National Estate forests at Errinundra Plateau and the Roger River wilderness; February 1990 halt to logging in National Estate forests and negotiated Commonwealth-State agreement to renew future logging	Normal \$25 Concession \$15 Family \$35
All voluntary	less than \$10,000 (none)	Monzo, occasional newsletter	Discovering Cooksland Discovering Fraser Island Fraser Island and Cooksland World Heritage also brochures and an educational kit	Salters	Stopping sand mining on Fraser Island by having a Commonwealth export embargo placed on mineral sands	\$10
11 part-time campaign co-ordinators; many volunteers	\$700,000 (less than 10%)	FCE Newsletter, bi-monthly Crash Reaction, quarterly	Energy at the Coastlands, video	Food co-op: bookshop, community arts gallery	End of whaling in Australia; successful acid-free petrol campaign; very successful 1989 donors campaign	Normal \$24 Concession \$18 Household \$30
Approx 40 staff: executive, administrative, media, and development directors, 4 campaign co-ordinators, campaign staff, administrative staff, many volunteer canvassers	\$2,000,000 (none)	Greenpeace Australia News, quarterly, colour	Global Warming: The Greenpeace Report book edited by Jeremy Leggett Greenpeace Book of Antarctica, book by Joan May Greenpeace Book of Dolphins, book edited by John May The Greenpeace Story, book by Michael Brown and John May The Nuclear Age, book edited by John May Greenpeace record and cassette Rainbow Warriors, double record and cassette 3 videos	Regular appeals to members; advertisements in print media, canvassing (door-to-door member recruitment programme), static events	Making an issue of the polluted state of our beaches, rivers and oceans, and subsequent action by governments, Federal Government decision to support world park in Antarctica and not to sign Antarctic Minerals Convention	Normal \$35 Concession \$25 Family \$50
Executive secretary; project officer; administrative officer, many volunteers	\$160,000 (10%)	National Parks Journal/branch newsletters	A Voice for the Wilderness, book Bushwalks in the Sydney Region, book edited by Stephen Lord and George Daniel	None	Lobbying successfully for National Parks and Wildlife Act 1967 and establishment of National Parks and Wildlife Service; creation of important nature reserves and National Parks including Myall Lakes, Blue Mountains, Kings Plains, Warrumbungle	Normal \$32 Concession \$22 Household \$35
One part-time office assistant, many volunteers	Information not available (\$5,600 federal)	National Parks Association News, 6 times a year	History of Lamington National Park, book in conjunction with J. Keith Jarrott	Fetes, statics, displays	We believe that our submissions have been instrumental and/or influential in the declaration of many National Parks, including Maroon Pinnacles	Metros: single \$25 family \$25 Country: single \$16 family \$22 (includes joining fee of \$5)
All voluntary	None	Newsletter	Thinking Like a Mountain, book Earth First, book and video Beweges and Builders, video Give Trees a Chance, video	None	'Too many to list'	Australian \$15 Overseas \$20 (membership through newsletter subscription)
More than 50 people employed in administration and campaigns, many volunteers	\$1,417,000 (4.5%)	Wilderness News, monthly State newsletters, calendars, posters and cards	Tasmania's Forests, book The Franklin Blockade Book, book The Lake Pedder Book, book The South West book, book Franklin Blockade, film Highland Waters, film wide range of educational videos for schoolchildren and general public	Raffles: merchandising through shops and mail-order catalogue	Franklin River 1982, Derwent ran forest 1987, Tasmanian World Heritage area expanded 1989, Melaleucoides 1990	Normal \$28 Concession \$17 Household \$30 Overseas \$50
Director, office manager; research officer; 4 project officers; publications manager; many volunteers	Information withheld	Newsletter, monthly Parkwatch, quarterly Bushwalking and Adventure Programme, twice yearly	The Alps in Flower, book by Ian McCann Australian Alps World Heritage Nomination Proposal, book by G. Mosley Discovering the Peninsula, book by DCE and WNP Discovering the Pines on Foot, book by DCE and WNP The Greenpeace-A Noble Range, book by Jane Calder The Malheur in Power, book by Ian McCann Standing Up For Your Local Environment, book by J. Barnett and R. Ward Victoria's National and State Parks, book by Jane Calder also 1989 reports	Windcheaters and T-shirts	Alpine National Park, halting clearing of the Malheur, Malheur National Parks; exclusion of mining from National Parks; campaign against alpine grazing	Normal \$28 Concession \$17 Family \$33 Corporate \$38 (clubs, societies)
Director, publications officer; office manager; many volunteers	\$130,000 (9.5%)	Wildlife Australia, quarterly WPSO News, quarterly	A major study on conservation values of Cape York Peninsula—due for release soon	Direct mail appeals	Instrumental in campaigns to save Great Barrier Reef, Lindeman Island, Mt Etna	Normal \$18 Concession \$12
Director, 5 conservation staff; 3 fund-raising staff; accountant; Melbourne office manager; 3 support staff; 2 public relations staff; many volunteers	\$1,800,000 (3%)	Wildlife News, international and Australian quarterly WWF Reports international bi-monthly Wildlife Australia, quarterly in conjunction with WPSO	The Importance of Biological Diversity, book Timber: From the South Seas, book WWF Conservation Yearbook WWF Poster Paper No 1 and No 3 on tropical forest conservation 1986 IUCN Red List of Threatened Animals also WWF International Special Reports	Product licensing; trading activities	Conservation of endangered species: humpback, jelly, orange bellied parrot, etc. Habitat protection: Old Wet Tropics, Raine Island-Great Barrier Reef, Cape York Peninsula, Muluja lands of Old, New England sublands, etc. Policy development: Federal Wildlife Protection Act, Federal Endangered Species Programme	\$25, 50, 75, 100



Glenn van der Knijff

Above, Battys Hut almost completely buried in the heavy snows of 1990.
Right, aged snow gum. All photos were taken on the Bogong High Plains, Victoria.







*Left, 'breaking waves'.
Below, early-morning
dew on spider's web.*



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Katherine River Gorge

Track Notes

Idyllic canoeing in Australia's tropical north, by Yvonne McLaughlin

▲ THE KATHERINE RIVER IS ONE OF THE major rivers of the Northern Territory and provides an excellent venue for paddlers and bushwalkers for most months of the year. The Katherine rises in remote hill country in western Arnhem Land and flows west past the township of Katherine on a meandering journey to the Timor Sea.

Between Grace Creek and Katherine township the Katherine River has cut a spectacular, rocky gorge down through the sandstone plateau. For some reason the Katherine Gorge is often spoken of as being divided into 13 gorges, each separated by a set of rocky rapids, but in fact it is one long, continuous gorge. I suppose there's a romantic ring to 'the 13 gorges of the Katherine River'.

The river was given its name by explorer John McDouall Stuart in 1862 and the Katherine Gorge National Park was first gazetted in 1963. On recently published maps, the park is shown as Nitmiluk National Park, a change of name reflecting the resumption of Aboriginal ownership of the land in September 1989. At present the park covers 180,000 hectares.

Recommended time. The dry season, from about April to December, is the time to paddle the gorge. The best conditions prevail between late April and August, when the water levels are still good. The levels drop slowly as the dry season progresses; trips taken later in the dry season offer less paddling and more portaging.

Maps. The relevant Natmap 1:100,000 sheets are *Katherine* and *Eva Valley*, and the general locality of the gorge can be found on any road map of the Northern Territory. A copy of the TopMap sheet *Katherine River Gorge* will be useful if you can get hold of one, but it has been out of print for several years. The recently released AUSLIG 1:250,000 map *Kakadu National Park and Surrounds* is also good, but very large.

Access. To reach the downstream end of the gorge, which is the starting point of most paddling trips, take the Katherine Gorge Road east out of Katherine township. This sealed road leaves the Stuart Highway at a signpost and reaches the National Park after approximately 30 kilometres. Beside the river are a Conservation Commission information office, a camping ground and a small general store. For a reasonable fee and a returnable deposit, 'indestructible' plastic kayaks and canoes can be hired here for a few hours, a day, or longer. Waterproof barrels, stoves and other miscellaneous items are also available.

Camping. A camping permit must be obtained from the Conservation Commission on the day of departure and the same authority must be notified of your safe return. At present there is no charge for the permit. Open fires are not allowed in the National Park so don't forget your stove. A tent is useful, but not essential. The water is clean and safe to drink.



Above: forget the white water, it's grade-six leisure paddling in the Katherine Gorge. Both photos Chris McLaughlin

The usual hygiene and safety procedures for bush camping should be followed. All rubbish must be taken out; neither burying nor burning of rubbish is permitted.

Motor-driven tours operate in the lower part of the gorge system and the Conservation Commission requires that you paddle up at least to the fifth gorge before unpacking your

tent. In any case, the best and quietest camping spots are to be found upstream from here.

The trip. The gorges are numbered 1–13, starting from the downstream end. In the dry season it is possible to paddle from below the first gorge upstream into the gorge system and then back again. As the flow of water in the dry season is meagre, there is not much difference between paddling upstream and down. However, in either direction a series of short portages is required to cross the 'rapids'

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between gorges. These portages vary in length from a couple of minutes to about half an hour—most take about five minutes.

It is relaxed, flat-water paddling all the way through the gorge. The hot weather, beautiful blue-green water and magnificent scenery make this an idyllic trip. It is best to vary the pace between slow and very slow in order to take in the views thoroughly and feel the tranquility of the area wash over you.

There are many interesting things to see and do while paddling up and then back down the gorge. The tropical vegetation is luxuriant and of particular interest to city dwellers, especially those from 'down south'. The butterflies and colourful insects are pleasant to watch, and fish are often spotted darting in and out of the shadowed waters. There are several places where Aboriginal art can be seen.

There is great swimming throughout almost the entire gorge. The water is clear and cool. You can swim from sloping sandy beaches, slide off low rock ledges, or even jump or dive into deep pools. The locals say there are no crocodiles in the gorge and I certainly saw no sign of any, but there may be some about. The good news is that these would be fresh-water crocodiles, which are smaller than their salt-water cousins; they are timid, and harmless to people.

The geology of the gorge system is very interesting. Sandstone, limestone and conglomerate occur commonly. The occasional lava flow can be seen between blocks of sandstone. It is worth while to sit and watch the sunset or sunrise. You will see a magnificent array of colours as the sun strikes the red-and-orange-streaked cliffs, while crevices and overhangs create fascinating, dark shadows.

If you go far enough upstream, there is a great sense of isolation and outback wilderness. For those who enjoy walking and want to explore further afield, there are side walks to take, ranging from a 30-minute ramble up Butterfly Gorge to casual rock-hopping at the Lily Ponds. For the more

adventurous (and tough!), there is a 17 kilometre walk to the magnificent Edith Falls in the northern part of the park.

Little personal equipment is required. The only necessities are good footwear for rock hopping—old runners are fine—and protection from the sun. A high-protection sun screen is essential, and a wide-brimmed hat is strongly recommended. Those who burn easily should consider wearing a light, long-sleeved shirt and long pants.

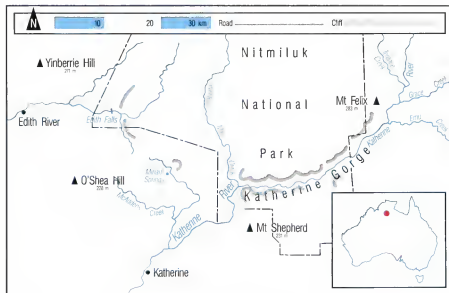


Above, more fierce leisure-paddling in Katherine Gorge.

Further information. For information on paddling, walking and camping in the Nitmiluk National Park write to the Conservation Commission of the Northern Territory, Katherine Gorge Information Centre, Gorge Road, Katherine, NT 0850. For information on the geology of the park write to the Northern Territory Department of Mines & Energy, PO Box 2901, Darwin, NT 0801; ask for a copy of Report No 3 of the Northern Territory Geological Survey, which is entitled *Geology of Katherine Gorge National Park* (\$20). ▲

Yvonne McLaughlin (see Contributors in Wild no 7) is Wild's Contributing Editor for canoeing. She has been paddling for some 15 years and is an instructor with the Victorian Board of Canoe Education.

Katherine River Gorge



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*Timberline Tents in use by Tim Macartney-Snape during the 1990 sea to summit expedition.
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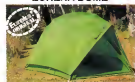
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Lightweight Tents

John Chapman puts them through the hoops

Wild Gear Survey

▲ TENTS HAVE COME A LONG WAY SINCE 1862 when Edward Whymper designed an 11 kilogram four-man shelter of canvas and timber for an attempt on the Matterhorn. It is generally acknowledged that this was the first tent designed to be as light as possible, fast to set up and able to withstand any storm. The 'A' shape chosen by Whymper remained standard for more than 100 years, with the only major refinement the reduction in weight made possible by improved materials.

In the mid-1970s a new material appeared which revolutionized tent design: flexible fibreglass poles or hoops. Designers were no longer constrained by straight lines. New tunnel and dome shapes offered more internal space and better use of floor area, and soon became popular. Since then, small refinements in design and materials have made hoop tents stronger, more reliable and more functional. The major change in materials has been the swing away from the use of fibreglass in poles to aluminium alloys. Recently a number of very lightweight 'one-pole dome' tents have appeared, supported in each case by a single, large hoop.

The tents surveyed here all weigh less than 3.7 kilograms. One-man shelters are included, provided they have one or more supporting poles; bivvy bags are not. Many good tents were too heavy for this survey. Some of these were included in the winter tent survey in *Wild* no 33. There are a couple of new models in this survey that were not yet available for review. The details for these have been provided by suppliers.

The table shows the country in which each tent was assembled, according to importers and manufacturers. The materials used come from many different countries. Most tents are now sewn in Korea, many to a very high standard of workmanship. However, Korea supplies the cheapest models as well. A few are made in countries where wages are higher, such as Australia, New Zealand and the UK. These tents are almost invariably of the highest construction standard. Check workmanship before you buy, regardless of where a tent was made.

The capacity specified is the number of people who can comfortably sleep inside the inner tent. A figure of 2/3 suggests a tent that is comfortable for two but will accommodate a third. In an emergency, an extra person can be squeezed into almost any tent.

The table attempts to give an indication of the shape of each tent. Some models are hybrids and do not fall clearly into a single category.

A-frame. The original tent shape consists of a straight ridge from which the tent drapes on both sides. One example in this survey has a full aluminium frame which makes for a strong, stable design provided it is pegged out. An advantage of the A shape is that the tent can

still be pitched reasonably well, using available trees or sticks, if poles should break or be lost.

Pyramid. The only tent in this category has a single, central pole but no floor or inner. It is the ultimate in lightweight efficiency and might be considered if you wish to sleep with the wildlife. Condensation would form in humid or cold conditions.

One-pole dome. This consists of a single, large hoop over which the tent drapes in similar style to the A-frame. This design has the best weight-to-area ratio of all and is ideal for the lightweight enthusiast. Disadvantages are the sloping sides, which limit headroom and hence the amount of usable floor area, and relative instability in strong winds. Some incorporate a small vestibule.

Arch. Some tent poles have pre-bent sections which give the tent a distinctive, arched shape. To prevent the occurrence in the fly of flat areas which might collect water or snow, such tents taper down toward the bottom end. The design has merit—headroom is good and weight low—but there could be a serious problem in the field if a pre-bent corner were to break; a simple pole sleeve would not suffice to effect a repair.

Tunnel. The design most favoured by lightweight tent users, it combines strength with increased useful space. The long, narrow shape accommodates tall people, while shorter people benefit from having extra space at their feet in which to place spare gear. Two hoops are used on most smaller models, and three on the more spacious designs. Practical experience has shown that a well-designed, securely pitched three-hoop tent is capable of surviving almost any storm. Early tunnels had an entrance at just one end, but most of the larger ones now have two. Perhaps the only disadvantage of tunnels is the need for pegs at each end.

Tunnel/dome. A combination of the tunnel and dome with at least two poles crossing to create a free-standing tent. In the lightest models, a third pole forms a hoop at the single entrance. The more common tunnel/dome uses four poles, the extra two forming a hoop at each end of the tent. This allows for two entrances and vestibules and provides additional headroom. Naturally, four poles are heavier than three, but this style is popular; it has proved to be very stable and reasonably roomy. Pegs are required to hold out the vestibules but are not as important to the overall structure as in a tunnel tent.

Half dome. A few tents have the appearance of a dome minus one side; others are more like a modified tunnel than a dome. All tents in this group have two or three intersecting poles and an irregular floor plan. Most are fairly lightweight, with a single entrance.

Dome. The traditional dome has a regular, hexagonal floor plan. In order to cut down weight, many makers 'flatten' the hex and



Above. One important, but often overlooked, function of a tent is the privacy it provides from prying eyes and cameras. David Noble

create a narrower tent. Many domes are just long enough for average-sized people, but provide handy space for spare gear on either side. They are also inherently strong by virtue of the intersecting poles. Reasonably sized vestibules are rare without the addition of an extra pole for support. Some of the best designs are asymmetrical; the poles cross excentrically at the top.

All weights are measured on the same set of scales (except for new models not yet available, as indicated) and include the entire tent as supplied—inner, fly, pegs, poles and tent bag.

All interior sizes have been measured except in the case of new models not available at the time of survey. Stated sizes are the maximum in each dimension and should be interpreted with that in mind, especially in tents of tapered and irregular floor designs.

Floor areas have been calculated from measurements taken from a standing tent. They differed by up to 30% from the sizes quoted in brochures. Small two-person tents have between 2.0 and 2.6 square metres of floor space; average models have up to 3.0 square metres; and the most luxurious can have as much as 4.0 square metres. A

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Wild Gear Survey Lightweight Tents

	Intended capacity, persons	Shape	Measured weight, kilograms	Maximum internal length x width x height, centimetres	Internal floor area, square metres	Vestibules, number/ internal length x width, square metres	Entrances	Poles, number/ material	Pegs, minimum/ maximum	Floor seams	Vents	Comments	Approx price, \$
Shack Diamond Korea													
Megamini	4	Pyramid	1.5	270 x 270 x 170	7.3	None	1	1 aluminium	4/8	None	None	No inner or floor	170
BushGear Korea													
Jaguar	2	Tunnel	3.6	218 x 158 x 108	2.8	2/1.4	2	3 aluminium	4/16	Sealed	2	Optional integral pitch (touch tape)	520
Caribee Korea													
Tourer	1	Tunnel	1.9	255 x 117 x 57	2.6	None	1	2 aluminium	3/9	Sealed	None	Permanent integral pitch	180
Voyager	2/3	Tunnel	3.5	237 x 160 x 112	3.5	2/5.7	2	2 aluminium	6/18	Sealed	None	Brown sleeves	300
Excite	3	Tunnel/dome	3.1	240 x 174 x 101	3.6	1/5.9	1	3 aluminium	2/12	Sealed	None	As above	350
Cedric	3	Tunnel	3.6	232 x 177 x 116	3.7	2/1.9	2	3 aluminium	6/14	Sealed	2	As above	350
DMH Korea													
Rene	2	Dome	3.2	210 x 132 x 133	2.8	None	1	2 fibreglass	0/8	None	1	Inner clips to poles	200
Eureka Korea													
Ossamer	1	Tunnel	1.3	230 x 95 x 65	1.8	None	1	2 aluminium	5/15	None	None	Permanent integral pitch	170
Rising Sun	1/2	Half dome	2.2	212 x 155 x 100	2.3	1/5.45	1	3 aluminium	2/10	None	None	Brown sleeves	325
Bike and Hike	2	1-pole dome	2.0	265 x 155 x 114	3.1	None	2	1 fibreglass	4/6	Sealed	None		240
Circus	2	Arch	1.8	218 x 147 x 110	2.6	1/5.5	1	2 aluminium	6/12	None	None	Inner clips to poles	260
Turbine 2	2	A-frame	3.5	218 x 150 x 106	3.5	None	1	5 aluminium	9/8	Sealed	1	Inner clips to poles, optional fly extension	290
Alum Wind	2	Half dome	2.7	242 x 149 x 112	3.0	1/5.7	1	3 aluminium	2/12	None	None	Brown sleeves	390
Expedition Caddis	2	Tunnel	3.1	232 x 176 x 117	3.2	2/1.4	2	3 aluminium	8/24	Sealed	2	As above	525
Fairlydown New Zealand													
Dragonfly	1	Tunnel	1.7	196 x 95 x 79	1.6	1/5.6	1	2 aluminium	5/9	Sealed	2		370
Slip	2	Tunnel/dome	3.7	217 x 132 x 107	2.6	2/1.2	2	4 aluminium	4/12	None	2	Brown sleeves	640
Altitude II	3	Tunnel	3.5	207 x 147 x 104	2.7	1/1.5	1	2 aluminium	5/15	Sealed	1	Optional integral pitch (top)	690
Hulmark New Zealand													
Solo	1	1-pole dome	1.8	220 x 75 x 96	1.6	1/1.3	1	1 aluminium	7/7	None	None	Optional integral pitch	320
Duo	2	1-pole dome	2.5	220 x 109 x 107	2.4	2/1.4	2	1 aluminium	8/14	Sealed	None	As above	350
Snow Cave	2/3	Tunnel	3.4	220 x 104 x 109	2.3	2/1.2	2	3/4 aluminium	4/10	Sealed	None	Optional integral pitch, optional ridge pole	590
Necpac New Zealand													
Midnight	1/2	1-pole dome	2.0	220 x 130 x 97	2.0	1/5.7	1	1 aluminium	6/6	Sealed	None	Optional integral pitch (touch tape)	310
Eclipse	2	1-pole dome	2.5	212 x 117 x 125	2.3	1/1.0	1	1 aluminium	6/10	Sealed	None	As above	400
Minaret	2	Tunnel	2.35	207 x 132 x 92	2.1	1/5.7	1	2 aluminium	4/10	None	1	As above	480
Minaret Expedition I	2	Tunnel	2.6	207 x 132 x 92	2.1	1/5.7	1	2 aluminium	4/14	None	1	As Minaret plus snow valances and anchors	550
Olympus	2	Tunnel	3.6	222 x 141 x 112	2.6	2/1.2	2	3 aluminium	4/16	Sealed	2	Optional integral pitch (touch tape)	645
Exodus	3	Half dome	3.4	232 x 140 x 120	3.2	1/1.8	2	2 aluminium	3/12	Sealed	1	As above	500
Selwe Korea													
Serra Dome	2	Dome	3.0	220 x 145 x 115	3.2	2/1.7	2	3 aluminium	2/14	Sealed	2	Inner clips to poles	429
Serra Designs Korea													
Clip Flash	2	Arch	1.6	225 x 143 x 112	2.8	1/5.35	1	2 aluminium	8/10	Not sealed	None	Inner clips to poles	290
Meteor Light	2	Dome	2.6	242 x 150 x 118	3.8	1/5.5	1	3 aluminium	1/9	Not sealed	None	2 poles in full sleeves, other pole clipped	400
Super Flash	2	Arch	2.4	230 x 147 x 115	2.8	1/5.5	1	3 aluminium	6/17	Not sealed	None	Inner clips to poles	470
Lookout	2/3	Dome	2.9	240 x 197 x 126	3.9	1/5.5	1	3 aluminium	1/13	Not sealed	None	Inner clips to poles, external guys	600
Vango Korea/UK													
Force 10 Mk 1 FW I	1	A-frame	1.5	195 x 130 x 85	1.6	1/5.5	1	4 aluminium	7/13	None	None		570
Odyssey Micro 2 I	2	1-pole dome	1.9	220 x 150 x 110	2.9	1/5.6	1	1 aluminium	4/10	Sealed	None	Pole in fly, internal guys	440
Odyssey 200	2	Tunnel/dome	3.65	222 x 150 x 102	3.4	2/1.6	2	4 aluminium	4/22	Sealed	2	Brown sleeves	750
Force 10 Mk 2 FW I	2	A-frame	1.8	190 x 130 x 89	2.4	1/5.8	1	4 aluminium	8/16	None	None		815
Hurricane Delta	2	Tunnel	2.7	209 x 121 x 95	2.2	1/1.2	1	2 aluminium	6/16	None	None	Optional integral pitch (top)	890
Hurricane Alpha I	2/3	Tunnel	3.2	215 x 135 x 100	2.5	1/1.3	1	2 aluminium	6/16	None	None	As above	890
Odyssey Micro 3 I	3	1-pole dome	2.3	230 x 180 x 125	3.7	2/1.2	2	1 aluminium	4/10	Sealed	None	Pole in fly, internal guys	530
Hurricane Beta	3	Tunnel	3.7	215 x 155 x 114	2.9	1/1.5	1	2 aluminium	6/16	None	None	Optional integral pitch (top)	970
Wild Country Korea													
Red Dwarf	1/2	Half dome	2.4	270 x 152 x 117	2.2	1/5.4	1	2 aluminium	3/9	Sealed	None	Brown sleeves	450
Odyssey	2	Tunnel	2.9	232 x 144 x 101	2.7	1/1.1	1	2 aluminium	6/18	Sealed	1	As above	450
Troar	2	Tunnel/dome	2.7	222 x 135 x 107	2.7	1/5.6	1	3 aluminium	4/14	Sealed	1	As above	500
Wilderness Equipment Australia													
Pied Arrow	2	Tunnel	3.6	200 x 150 x 115	2.6	2/1.2	1	3 aluminium	3/12	Sealed	1	Optional integral pitch (touch tape)	620

† model unavailable for measurement; dimensions supplied by manufacturer

Passy Pollen



Expedition Dome

Everything a good dome tent should be: spacious inside (with a big vestibule) and rock solid in a gale (there's up to 23 guy points on the fly, plus internal guying!) Best of all, it's the lightest three-person dome of its kind in the world.

Capacity	2 people
Area	5.01 m ²
Weight	3.49 kg
Packed size	16 x 51 cm
	\$689

Glenn Temples

State of the Arc

Sierra Designs takes lightweight tent technology to new heights.

Every gram counts. Sierra Designs tents are up to a kilogram lighter than equivalent models from other makers! The greatest weight saving comes from the Swift Clip system which eliminates heavy pole sleeves.

Easy pitching is assured with the Swift Clip system, which uses tough Delrin clips to suspend the inner tent from the poles. This system reduces pole stress by allowing the poles to be arched before attaching the inner tent. With four-season models an internal guying option maximises the structural integrity of the tent in extreme conditions.

Quality fabrics include 1.9 ounce ripstop nylon canopies with a two-layer polyurethane coating waterproof to 80 psi.

Floor and sidewall fabrics have a three-layer coating waterproof to 100 psi.

Excellent ventilation is a feature of the Swift Clip system, which allows air to pass unimpeded between the fly and inner tent, reducing condensation. Well-designed doors, ceiling panels and windows enable you to regulate airflow without compromising weatherproofness.



Super Flash

A sturdy mountain tent that packs down small and weighs just 2.41 kg! The three pre-angled poles form a sleek rain- and snow-shedding shape. Steep sidewalls provide ample usable space and there is a vestibule for gear storage.

Capacity	2 people
Area	3.76 m ²
Weight	2.41 kg
Packed size	15 x 48 cm
	\$469



Lookout

The Lookout excels in a number of roles. For summer camping the ceiling aips out to reveal a mesh sky panel for unimpeded ventilation. Come winter, the full fly coverage, internal guy system and storage vestibule ensure all-weather protection.

Capacity	2-3 people
Area	4.65 m ²
Weight	3.00 kg
Packed size	15 x 53 cm
	\$389



Meteor Light

A stable dome tent for walking, cycle touring and backpacking. For its weight it has remarkable space and headroom. The mesh ceiling panel gives excellent airflow and is ideal for star gazing. With three equal length poles the Meteor Light is fast to pitch.

Capacity	2 people
Area	4.32 m ²
Weight	2.61 kg
Packed size	16 x 51 cm
	\$399



Clip Flash

Quick and easy to pitch, this is a top tent for three-season use. Pre-angled poles and Swift Clips add strength and room. Ventilation is via the mesh entrance, rear window and the generous separation between the fly and inner tent. Few tents are as compact and light to carry as the Clip Flash.

Capacity	2 people
Area	3.43 m ²
Weight	1.73 kg
Packed size	14 x 43 cm
	\$289

Area includes vestibule.



**SIERRA
DESIGNS**

Sydney (City) 507 Kent St (02) 264 2685	Miranda 527 Kingsway (02) 525 6829	Jindabyne Kosciuszko Rd (064) 562 922	Canberra 11 Lonsdale St Braddon (062) 57 3883	Melbourne 360 Little Bourke St (03) 670 4845	Box Hill 8 Market St (03) 898 8596	Launceston 59 Brisbane St (003) 314 240	Hobart 76 Elizabeth St (002) 310 777	Adelaide 228 Rundle St (08) 232 3155	Perth 1/891 Hay St (09) 321 2666
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reasonably comfortable area for each person is 1.3 to 1.5 square metres.

The table shows both the number and the total area of **vestibules**—covered areas without a floor which enclose and protect doorways. They are handy for storing wet packs, clothing and boots, and can be used for preparing meals in inclement weather. An area of 1.0 square metre is just sufficient for two packs and assorted wet equipment. More space will always be useful.

Entrances. This column records the number of doors through the fly and into the inner tent. Window-style openings are not counted.

Poles. A majority of the tents surveyed use tubular 7075 aluminium alloy, which has proved very satisfactory in the past. Some models use recently developed alloys that are said to be stronger, more flexible and less brittle. Whilst these claims are supported by laboratory tests, only extended use in the field will verify them. Poles account for about one-third of the total cost of the tent; some cheaper models use a lower-grade alloy. On the whole, you get what you pay for. Whilst cheap poles will be adequate for 99% of the time, it is the other 1% which determines whether a tent can be relied upon.

Fibreglass poles are now rare. Good fibreglass performs well, but has fallen out of favour as a result of the proliferation of cheap fibreglass poles which failed spectacularly and often. When fibreglass breaks, it usually shatters and is difficult to repair in the field. Aluminium is more likely to break at a single point and is easy to fix with a suitable pole sleeve. When purchasing a tent, make sure that spare poles are available and, if possible, obtain an emergency pole sleeve—included by many manufacturers as a standard spare part.

The minimum number of **pegs** shown is the absolute minimum required to pitch the tent. Many tents will be only poorly tensioned by so few pegs; the fly may touch the inner and vestibules may sag. The maximum number given includes storm guys on the fly. In windy weather you could expect to have to peg out all points; the more there are, the better. The number of pegs usually used will be somewhere between the two quoted figures.

The ideal floor has no **seams** at all. This is practicable only in smaller models; wider tents usually have one floor seam. In the past it was necessary to apply seam sealant by hand several times during the life of a floor, but most tents are now sealed in the factory.

The table indicates the number of **vents** in the fly. A door that can be unzipped from the top to provide ventilation is counted as a vent. Partial unzipping of the doorway further improves ventilation in many tents, especially those with vestibules. In some, however, opening the door exposes the inner floor to rain. Vents do reduce condensation, but there is more to this than first appears. Some tents without vents work very well, whilst others with several are often damp inside. A fly which sits high off the ground at its edges, and a small increase in the separation between fly and inner tent will both contribute to reduced condensation.

The approximate retail price shown serves as a reasonable indicator of the quality of

materials used and of workmanship. Within reason, the higher the price, the better the quality. When two tents look similar, it may be very hard to understand why one is twice the price of the other. In the field, when tents begin to fail, the reason may become uncomfortably apparent. Things you can readily check are the finish, the reinforcing of stress points—pole sleeves, corners and peg points—and the cut. A taut tent will shed rain and withstand wind better than one which sags and ripples.

Selection. No single tent will be ideal in all circumstances. Your first step should be to decide on the sort of use your tent is likely to have. The one you select should be able to cope with the most difficult conditions you expect to encounter, and perform acceptably well for the rest of the time.

What is your most important requirement? If you want a tent for bicycle touring, where extreme weather will be avoided and packing space is at a premium, total bulk may be the deciding factor, and a simple, lightweight model the best choice. For extended bushwalks, additional internal room, vestibule space and strength may justify the extra weight of a tunnel or dome.

Having thus narrowed the field, prepare a 'want list' according to your needs, and go shopping. If you're particularly tall, or require lots of headroom or space for gear, ask to see tents pitched, and get inside—with a friend, if possible. Take your shoes off first, though!

You'll probably be left with a choice of models which satisfy your needs. One factor not yet mentioned which may help you to make a final decision is the method of pitching. Tents supported by flexible poles or hoops traditionally have pole sleeves in the inner tent and a fly which fits over the top and is pegged down once the inner is erected. Pitching is fairly easy, and both parts of the tent contribute to its structural strength. Inner and fly can easily be separated for packing or for drying in sunny spells. Clearance between inner and fly can be increased by pegging out the fly further from the poles. On the down side, the inner tent will get wet if erected in the rain. This can be minimized by spreading the fly over the inner while inserting the poles; and, in any case, I've only found it to be a problem about a dozen times in 1,000 days of walking. The pole sleeves of many tents which are erected in this manner are broken into sections with gaps between; this practice improves ventilation but is a hindrance to quick pitching.

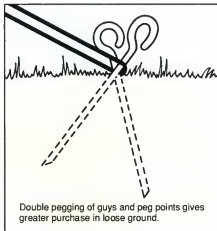
In many of the more recent designs, the pole sleeves are incorporated in the fly, and the inner tent is suspended within. Most tents of this type can be pitched 'integrally'—inner and fly remain connected for packing and are pitched together. Pitching can usually be accomplished quickly, and air circulation between inner and fly is good. The two can still be separated if required. In most cases it is possible to pitch the fly first and hang the inner later; and in some, the inner can be pitched without the fly by using the loops that normally connect the two parts as a substitute for the pole sleeves. Integral pitching has some disadvantages. Except in a few cases, the parts of the tent cannot quickly be separated in order to take advantage of sunshine; once separate, to reconnect them can be fiddly and

slow. The distance between inner and fly cannot easily be adjusted. Pole sleeves are often narrow, and erecting the tent with wet or frozen poles can be difficult.

On the whole, both integral and separate pitching work well. Certainly, each system has its adherents among both manufacturers and experienced users of tents.

Use, care and maintenance. To remain comfortable in a lightweight tent requires some skill, and this comes with practice. An expensive tent is no substitute for experience. Here are a few tips drawn from many nights in the field in a variety of tents.

Carry spare pegs. Pegs are easily lost or broken; and the practice of double pegging can make your tent much more secure on loose or slushy ground. Waterproof bags can be useful when carrying a wet tent. If your pack has two compartments, consider carrying your tent in the bottom one; then water from a wet tent will not percolate through the rest of your belongings.



Select your site carefully. Use natural wind-breaks such as rocks and vegetation. Pick as flat a spot as you can find, and especially avoid depressions where water is likely to run or gather. Pitch the tent with the doorway out of the wind, and as tautly as possible. Sagging panels will flap in the wind, and condensation will find its way inside at any point where the fly touches the inner tent.

Sooner or later the floor of your tent will start to leak. The choice then is between reproofing, replacement—of the floor or the entire tent—and putting up with its diminished effectiveness. In the meantime, consider carrying an extra groundsheet. One school of thought recommends placing this underneath the tent to protect the floor from damage. This at best postpones the inevitable. As well, heavy rain will run across the top of this protecting sheet and eventually seep through the tent floor. On the other hand, a groundsheet laid like a tub inside the tent will provide a second layer of resistance to water flowing across the ground, but will not protect the floor against punctures. You may select the method appropriate to the situation.

To minimize the condensation which occurs in all nylon tents, leave outer doors partially unzipped whenever weather permits. Leave inner doors open too, or use only the insect screen. These measures will allow a flow of air

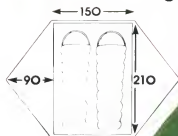
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Polyester's high UV resistance (2-3 times that of nylon) means your tent will last longer and it has the added bonus of only half the stretch of nylon (giving better pitch and stability).

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... an uncommonly practical design:

Designed by Salewa (Sal-ee-wa) of West Germany, this unique tent is packed with features.

Inner Tent has a genuine 'bath-tub' floor construction, lantern loops and handy storage pockets. Entrances on both sides have additional mosquito net doors to ensure maximum flow thru ventilation and provide a welcome sanctuary from annoying insects. The height of 115 cm allows two to sit up in comfort.

Polyester Flysheet extends 'down to earth' to seal out wind-driven rain and snow. The fly can be pitched first in wet weather or by itself to provide a lightweight (2 kg) single-skin shelter for up to 3 or 4

people. Two closeable vents (one in each vestibule) minimise condensation when cooking or when the fly is completely closed. All seams are factory seam-sealed for complete waterproofness.

Two Vestibules. You no longer need to put up with gear cluttering your sleeping area, store it all - packs and boots included, in one vestibule. Use the other as a dry, roomy, well-ventilated cooking area.

Alloy Poles are shock-corded for easy assembly. Strong and light, these poles fold down into 50 cm long sections that stow easily in any pack.

Lightweight 3 kg (approx).

Come in to any of the following Intertrek shops and see this most uncommon tent while stocks last.

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ODYSSEY

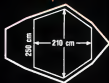
VANGO

Odyssey tents—lightweight and solid. Geodesic pole configurations in the Odyssey 200, 300 and 400 give stability. Taped seams and durable, coated nylon fabrics resist water. No-see-um netting repels insects.



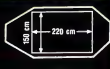
ODYSSEY 400

Inner Tent
Height: 120 cm
Length: 210 cm
Width: 250 cm
Weight of tent complete: 4.6 kg



ODYSSEY 300

Inner Tent
Height: 100 cm
Length: 220 cm
Width: 150 cm
Weight of tent complete: 3.9 kg



ODYSSEY 200

Inner Tent
Height: 100 cm
Length: 220 cm
Width: 150 cm
Weight of tent complete: 3.7 kg



Odyssey Micro—an Aarn design (patent application 8925555). Single 8.5 mm diameter aluminium-alloy pole for light weight. Internal tension bands brace the structure to resist deformation in high winds. Odyssey quality fabrics and fittings.

ODYSSEY MICRO 2

Inner Tent
Height: 110 cm
Length: 220 cm
Width: 150 cm
Weight of tent complete: 1.9 kg



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Wild Gear Survey

through the tent. In stormy weather, leave the doorway on the lee side partly open and moist air will be drawn out by the wind. Store any wet equipment in the vestibule or in an area specially designated on the downhill side.

Do not cook inside the inner tent. Apart from the very real risk of fire, fuel stoves produce dangerous vapours. I don't recommend cooking in the vestibule, either. All stoves give off fumes which contain a small amount of unburnt and partially burnt fuel. This will condense on the highest part of the fly and will gradually destroy the waterproof coating there. (Shellite is a renowned dissolving agent; methylated spirits may not have the same effect.) My first three tents all began to leak badly at the top of the fly, so my stove now stays just outside the outer door regardless of rain or snow. It works perfectly well there, and my most recent tent lasted twice as long as any of its predecessors. The proofing is in the same condition all over—it leaks everywhere!

Insect repellent sprays should never be used inside a nylon tent, and even stick and roll-on types release fumes which will damage waterproof coatings. Use the insect screens provided to keep the hordes out, and the time-honoured methods of swatting and capture to deal with intruders.

When packing a tent, resist the temptation to fold it the same way every time. Proofing will wear significantly along regularly used folds, so vary your method. Don't be afraid to stuff the tent unfolded into its bag if packing in a hurry—in foul weather, for example. It will look very creased when next erected, but no permanent harm will be done.

Mould and mildew are among a tent's worst enemies. Spread your tent out or hang it up to dry at every opportunity during a trip. Hot weather is not needed; a light breeze will often suffice. Upon completion of every trip, dry your tent thoroughly before packing it away. Even a tent that felt dry on the last morning will contain some condensation in seams or webbing.

Most dirt will brush off once dry. Dirty tents can be washed with mild soap and warm water, and more stubborn stains will usually come out with a small amount of methylated spirits. Other solvents, including Shellite and kerosene, should be avoided. Rinse to remove all cleaning agents, and dry thoroughly.

Prolonged exposure to ultraviolet light can reduce the life of a nylon tent to less than a year, so don't leave yours pitched in one place for months on end. Store it in a cool, dark, dry place. My last tent survived 400 days of use in eight years. If used for about 25 days a year and well maintained, most good lightweight tents could be expected to last for ten years—the shelf life of nylon.

The process of preparing this survey has already assisted me in selecting my next tent. To reveal my choice would be misleading as my requirements and preferences are likely to be different from yours. Observe what works and what doesn't for others with needs similar to your own, and use this knowledge. It's not that difficult a task. ▲

John Chapman (see Contributors in Wild no 1) is one of Australia's most travelled and widely respected bushwalking writers. He is particularly well known for his books of Tasmanian track notes.

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Headlamps

The third eye that illuminates all—*Wild* pays homage

Equipment

Jeez, Mate, You a Coal-miner? To me, common sense dictates that in virtually every situation where I might need a portable light source (more conventionally, a torch) I also need my hands, so I use a headlamp. Several brands are available locally, the large range of prices to some extent reflects the variety of their applications. Simple models are adequate for reading or cooking, whilst more elaborate and expensive models will illuminate your pre-dawn mountaineering assault. Battery life depends on the batteries used and will vary with the temperature (some models are designed specifically to cope with extreme cold). Brightness is a subjective estimation but serves as a basis of comparison. For the purposes of this survey, an A in the brightness column indicates suitability for static activities at close range, such as cooking; B indicates suitability for night-time walking; and C, bike riding or skiing at night. High intensity halogen globes can be purchased separately for most of the lamps surveyed. These are extremely bright, but they are expensive and tend to chew through batteries at a rapid rate. An assessment of durability and reliability is beyond the scope of this survey. To some extent, you get what you pay for. The astute buyer should test any headlamp before purchasing (particularly the cheaper models). They are quite simple units and experience has shown that if they work once, they will probably continue to do so. None of the lamps tested claim to be



Above. Aiking Wombat day pack on the Bluff (Mt Butler in the background), Victoria. Andrew King

waterproof, but all the better models are acceptably water-resistant. As for comfort, balance and fit—I suggest you try them on your own head. Note that the table lists the

weight and price of each unit with standard globe and without batteries. Performance figures are included for various combinations of batteries and high-density globes, which are purchased separately.

Stewart Spooner

Wild Equipment Survey Headlamps

	Weight without batteries, grams	Batteries, number, type	Globe	Brightness	Battery duration, hours	Spare globe	Variable focus	Comments	Approx price, \$						
Black Diamond															
40 Below	168	1, lithium-D	Standard	A	20	Y	Y	Lithium battery (RRP \$54) functions in extreme cold	52.50						
		1, lithium-D	Krypton	B	na	Y	Y								
		4, AA	Standard	B	na	Y	Y	As above							
		4, AA	Krypton	C	na	Y	Y	As above							
Coghians															
Headlight	na	4, AA	Standard	A	na	N	N		10.50						
Petal															
Micro	100	2, AA	Standard	A	5	Y	Y		40.00						
		2, AA	Halogen	B	3.5	Y	Y								
Zoom	145	1, 4.5 volt	Standard	B	17	Y	Y	Also available as 'Arctic' with separate battery pack for extreme cold	63.95						
		1, 4.5 volt	Halogen	C	6.5	Y	Y								
Mega	195	3, AA	Standard	B	8	Y	Y	As above	79.00						
		3, AA	Halogen	C	2.75	Y	Y	As above							
		3, C	Standard	B	30	Y	Y								
		3, C	Halogen	C	11	Y	Y								
Sawto	na	2, AA	Standard	B	8	Y	Y	Spare globe carried separately	19.95						
										3, AA	Standard	B	8	Y	Y
										3, AA	Halogen	C	2.75	Y	Y
no information not available															

Pot of Gold. While on the subject of portable light: Information, *Wild* no 38, carried the story of a portable solar-powered charger for AA batteries, developed in the Netherlands. We have been informed by a reader that there is no need to send a carrier pigeon round the globe in search of such things. They are available from *Rainbow Power Co*, Nimbin, NSW—phone (066) 89 1430. The range available includes a model which will charge up to four AA batteries and sells for RRP \$15 (nickel-cadmium cells are included), as well as others for AAA, C, D and larger batteries.

Winning the Battle. While many small businesses in Victoria kick, struggle and collapse, *Aiking Equipment* expands. The experience gained over several years of repairing and altering other people's equipment went initially into a small range of gaiters, bags, wallets and accessories. Now there are two *Aiking day packs*: the *Wombat* (RRP around \$79) is made of 12-ounce canvas, and has a zipped top opening and zipped front pocket. The *Pygmy Possum* (RRP around \$120) is also made of canvas, reinforced with Cordura, and has a zipped pocket in the lid. It has a sternum strap and waist belt; these can be attached to the *Wombat* if required. Both packs have cleverly



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Soups

Alpine Minestrone

A meal in itself with pasta, tomato, pinto beans, white beans, onions, carrots, cabbage, potatoes, peas, peppers and celery

Creamy Clam Chowder

A New England soup with potatoes, clams, sour cream, red bell peppers, onions, celery and spices.

Fruit

Strawberries

Whole and freeze-dried

Meals

Mountain Chili

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Pasta, broccoli and mushrooms in a rich cream sauce

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Pasta, tomato, mushrooms, and herbs create a traditional Italian meal

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Local Colour. The Bush Kakadu and Alpine Kakadu rucksacks made by *Outgear*, in Footscray, Victoria, were described in *Equipment*, Wild no 36. The *Daintree* and the *Mawson*, to be released early in the new year, are double-compartment versions of these, with refinements to pockets and overall shape as well. RRP \$345.



Above, printed Outgear Yandee day pack. Right, Outdoor Research hat and mitts.

A special version of the popular *Outgear Ultra Yandee day pack* is available in limited quantities. It is made of 12-ounce canvas, printed with an Aboriginal design which depicts goannas and is the work of Sharon Hodgson of the Wirajuri tribe. RRP \$90.

Walking the Dog. In recent years, rafters and others have occasionally been observed to return from abroad wearing odd hybrids of sandals and surfers' thongs. Until now only available in the USA and a few other exotic places, *sports sandals* are now marketed in Australia, and will soon be manufactured here, by *Big Dog Footwear* of Clovelly, NSW. They are more durable and give the feet more support than a pair of thongs, and they won't flap about or fall off. Their laminated rubber soles are held on securely by adjustable straps of nylon webbing and Velcro, which will expand to accommodate socks or wet-suit booties. Big Dogs are black, with contrasting bits in blue or grey. They are available in men's sizes 5-12 and cost RRP \$26. Look for them, initially at least, at Mountain Designs and Paddy Pallin shops.

Love a Duck. A new *Intertrek* synthetic-filled sleeping bag, manufactured in New Zealand by Arthur Ellis, the maker of Fairytown bags, offers good value at RRP \$129. It has a slightly tapered shape, separate zips down either left or right side and across the foot, a hood and an effective three-dimensional draught tube.

Filling comprises two layers of hollow Dacron fibre. Total weight is a touch over 1.9 kilograms. As for length—this 176 centimetre reviewer was swallowed up with about 10 centimetres to spare.

¡Duerme Bien! The *Artiach Confort-Mat* is made in Spain. It is a self-inflating sleeping mat of similar design to the well-known Therm-a-Rest, and is available in two sizes. The 180 centimetre mat weighs 900 grams and costs RRP \$98, and the 120 centimetre mat weighs 600 grams and costs RRP \$78. From *Intertrek* shops.

Protecting the Extremities. *Intertrek* shops import a range of protective clothing for hands, feet and head, and accessories to assist in organizing clothing and other gear, all made in Seattle, USA, by *Outdoor Research*. Crocodiles are gaiters made of Gore-Tex and nylon-lined Cordura. They are secured under the foot by a neoprene strap; they open and close by means of a strip of touch tape, wide enough to allow some variation in fit. RRP \$66. X-Gaiters are an alternative to Yeti gaiters and others which enclose the lower part of the boot in a rubber band. X-Gaiters cover the boot with



lined and padded Cordura right down to the level of the welt, and are secured around the welt and under the foot with shock cord. RRP \$119.95. Hats bearing the OR label include: a baseball cap with detachable sun shade for ears and neck, Foreign Legion style (RRP \$29.95); a 'sombbrero' in lined, seam-sealed Gore-Tex (RRP \$55); and 'the world's first modular hat system'—a lined Gore-Tex cap with ear-flaps and a removable synthetic pile liner (RRP \$57.50). There are Gore-Tex overmitts with Cordura palms (RRP \$35); *Modular Mitts* with palms made of high-friction material and removable pile liners (RRP \$76); and *Expedition Mitts* cut to conform to the curve of the hand (RRP \$116). All three varieties are now seam-sealed, and can be secured at both wrist and cuff with touch-tape straps. Other OR accessories include crampon pouches, rope bags, first aid kits, stuff sacks, zipped pouches in nylon and mesh, and an insulating jacket for your water bottle.

Pythagorean Geometry. The *Eureka! Clip Dome* is a new two-person tent. As the name suggests, the inner tent is clipped to the poles, a method which allows quick pitching and increases circulation of air between inner and fly. RRP \$239. Also new are two family-sized tents—the *Equinox* and the *Timberline Base Camp*. All imported by Aymford. Camp Trails rucksacks, imported by Aymford and

mentioned in *Equipment*, Wild no 38, are made in Korea, not in North America.

Yuksack. The mere sight of the *Salawa Canyon SH60 internal-framed rucksack*, several of its panels printed with busy, Himalayan motifs, will have many bushwalkers looking around desperately for the shelter of some olive-green canvas. However, an inspection that goes beyond cosmetics may intrigue those of engineering bent. The *Salawa* harness is an interesting one, which allows considerable adjustment: vertically, to the position of waist belt and shoulder straps; and of the horizontal separation between the latter. Short, lightly built wearers are well catered for. There is a catch: at 2.8 kilograms, the SH60 is a heavy rucksack, and much of its weight can be attributed to the hardware entailed by all these adjustments. If you like buckles and zips, you'll love it. RRP \$259. A smaller SH50 (RRP \$239) and a larger SH75 (RRP \$275) are also available. From *Intertrek* shops.

American Rope Tricks. Two new ascenders from *CMi* are designed for use with ropes from 11 to 16 millimetres in diameter. The *Ultra* has two attachment points at its lower end, and a moulded plastic insert for a comfortable grip. It weighs 260 grams and sells for around \$80 each. The *Mini Ultra* weighs 190 grams and sells for around \$70 each. They replace the *CMi 5004* and *Shorti* ascenders; the catch which holds the cam open has been redesigned. Imported from the USA by *Spelean*.

Neon Lights. The length of the *Stubai Tirol Lightweight 12-point crampons* is easily adjusted without tools, and the tightness of the step-in heel binding is controlled by a wing-nut; only the separation of the side posts requires a spanner to set. One outside point on each crampon is angled outwards from the vertical for improved grip when traversing. They come in two fluorescent colours—yellow or pink—and a pair weighs one kilogram. RRP \$128 a pair. Imported by *Outdoor Agencies*.

A pair of *Salawa Featherweight crampons* weighs just 710 grams, including neoprene straps. These are eight-point crampons for use on firm snow, rather than for technical climbing—an occasional adjunct to a pair of ski touring boots, for example. A long shank of spring steel lends flexibility and allows adjustment to fit a wide range of boot sizes. RRP \$96, and \$19.95 for the straps, at *Intertrek* shops. *Salawa instep crampons*, of variable width and complete with nylon straps, sell for RRP \$29.95.

Living on Aire. Two brands of freeze-dried food—both, as it happens, from California—are now available on Australian shelves. The bill of fare from both *Backpacker's Pantry* and *Alpine Aire* contains dishes to make the mouth water, the mind boggle and the pocket wince. However, in our limited experience—of a few main meals, and whole, freeze-dried strawberries—they were worth looking forward to. As is often the case, however, dinners designed for two could be put away without difficulty by one hungry walker. Distributed by *Richards McCallum* and *Spelean*, respectively.

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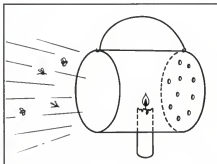
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Save Our Souls. Why didn't we think of it? As far as we can work out, the *SOS Survival Over-Suit* is an individually tailored, hooded, touch-tape-sealed *Space Blanket*. It's designed to conserve body heat in cold, wet, windy conditions, weighs half a kilogram, and can be opened wide for easy insertion of an unconscious person. We can think of things we'd rather be wearing when the *Main Range* turns nasty, but if the *Titanic* were going down, we wouldn't be caught dead in anything else. The *SOS* is distributed from Turramurra, NSW, and sells for RRP \$100.

Can the Candle? Well-known alpinist and mountain guide Geoff Wayatt is based at present in Banff, Canada, and wrote to us describing a solution 'as old as the original trappers in the Rockies' to an even older problem.



Above, 'bug lamp'.

'If your torch batteries are flat, night is closing in quickly and you are still kilometres from your car—don't despair! The "bug lamp" is cheap, easy to make, and immune to electrical problems—and you won't believe how well it works in a strong wind. Never again will I contemplate walking by the light of a Shellite stove!

Materials

One coffee can or similar, approximately 12 centimetres in diameter and 17 centimetres high. The diameter determines the shape of the beam emitted. In an emergency, a billy could be used.

One candle

30 centimetres of soft steel wire

Construction

1 Cut an X, slightly larger than the diameter of the candle, half-way along the side of the can. Bend the points inward and push the candle into the can.

2 Punch several small holes in the bottom of the can to provide limited ventilation.

3 Punch two holes, one at each end, in the side of the can opposite the candle hole, and attach the wire handle.

As the candle burns down, it should be pushed further into the can. The top of the lamp gets hot, so use wire for the handle rather than cord. Take especial care in bushfire season, or if using the bug lamp in or around a tent.

New products (on loan to *Wild*) and/or information about them, including colour slides, are welcome for possible review in this department. Written items should be typed, include recommended retail prices and preferably not exceed 200 words. Send to the Editor, *Wild*, PO Box 415, Prahran, Victoria 3181.

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It's a Date!

Reviews

Annual review of wilderness calendars and diaries

Antarctica Calendar 1991 (Ink Group, RRP \$14.95). **Australian Waterfalls 1991 Calendar** (John Piesse, RRP \$12.50). **Australian Wildlife Calendar 1991** (Wilderness Society, RRP \$13.95). **1991 Wilderness New South Wales** (Kalianna Press, RRP \$9.95). **Tasmanian Wilderness Calendar** (Peter Dombrovskis, RRP \$14.95). **Wild Places of Australia 1991** (Robert Rankin, RRP \$10.95). **Wilderness Australia 1991** (Robert Rankin, RRP \$10.95). **The Wilderness of New South Wales 1991** (Robert Rankin, RRP \$10.95). **Wilderness Queensland 1991** (Robert Rankin, RRP \$10.95). **Wilderness Society Calendar 1991** (Wilderness Society, RRP \$13.95). **Wilderness Tasmania 1991** (Rob Blakers, RRP \$7.95). **Wilderness Victoria 1991** (Robert Rankin, RRP \$10.95).

A new entry this year, *Antarctica* is a collection of photos by well-known Australian Antarctic photographer/explorer, Jon Chester. His pictures capture the beauty and grandeur of the frozen continent, but at \$14.95 his is the equal most expensive calendar reviewed and not the best produced.

John Piesse has continued to improve his product and with the 1991 edition, *Waterfalls* has reached the highest standards. The quality—and variety—of the photos is remarkable.

The Wilderness Society has again produced its two well-loved calendars to standards we have come to expect. *Wildlife* deserves its continued massive appeal (the photo of the honey possum is a winner). The society's landscape calendar includes excellent photos of lesser-known wilderness as well as a few almost too familiar scenes.

Wilderness New South Wales is a tried and true old favourite with NSW bushwalkers. The 1991 edition is an improvement on previous years.

There is no denying that, even with so much competition, Peter Dombrovskis rules supreme in the field of Australian wilderness calendars and diaries. His production and design are consistently in a class apart, and just when you think he has run out of original subject matter he floors you with photos like that of Lake Salome in his 1991 calendar.

The Rupert Murdoch of Australian wilderness calendar and diary publishing, Robert Rankin, is at his prolific best for 1991. And at last year's price of \$10.95, they are even better value than before. Horizontal-format *Wild Places* and *Wilderness Australia* won't set the world on fire, but aren't bad either. *New South Wales* competes with the long-established offering from Kalianna Press but fails to match it, despite a superb bark detail. In his home State of Queensland, Rankin reigns unchallenged and the result is generally more pleasing than his other calendars. Some interesting and original photos, including those of Eurobin Falls at Mt



Above, unnamed waterfall on Deep Creek, northern Grampians, Victoria. Photo by John Piesse, reproduced from *Australian Waterfalls 1991 Calendar*.

Buffalo and a stand of alpine ash on Mt Feathertop, stand out from the otherwise workmanlike photos of *Wilderness Victoria*.

A new entry in 1990, small-format *Wilderness Tasmania* fills a small but definite niche and does it well.

Chris Baxter

Natural Australia Desk Diary 1991 (Australian Conservation Foundation, RRP \$29.95). **1991 Wilderness Diary** (Peter Dombrovskis, RRP \$19.95). **Wild Australia Diary 1991** (Robert Rankin, RRP \$12.95). **Wilderness Diary 1991** (Australian Conservation Foundation, RRP \$16.95).

On the wilderness diary front, it's almost an exact rerun of 1990—the same four entries at the same prices (except for Dombrovskis's contribution: up one dollar).



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By any measure, *Natural Australia* is a publication of substance. Some of the photos, particularly a couple of pictures of birds, are stunning. The ACF's cheaper offering was singled out for particular praise last year. The 1991 edition is up to the same standard and includes varied, interesting and generally very good photos. Some, such as of a precarious arch near Chambers Pillar, are remarkable.

Robert Rankin continues to offer remarkable value for money with, if anything, improved quality.

Peter Dombrowski's photography is at its best in his 1991 *Wilderness Diary*. If you love Tasmania's wild beauty, you'll find it irresistible. The photo of snow-clad Precipitous Bluff at sunset is almost passionate.

CB

Parks: Victoria's National and State Parks by Jane Calder (Victorian National Parks Association and the Canterbury Press, 1990, RRP \$39.95).

This substantial tome sets out on the ambitious task of documenting the main features and other basic information concerning every National and State Park in Victoria. The result is attractive, and a useful reference, even if it isn't great literature. Unfortunately, however, much of it is reminiscent of a collection of Department of Conservation and Environment leaflets available for visitors to each park. Indeed, it looks as if the many (attractive and useful) maps have come straight from such a source. *Parks* has many interesting black-and-white illustrations and a generous serve of excellent colour photos, although you wonder about the reliability of much of the information in the book as at least two of the photo captions describe incorrectly what is depicted.

CB

South-West Tasmania—A Natural History & Visitor's Guide by Ken Collins (Heritage Books, 1990, RRP \$39.95).

It is an ambitious task to produce an all-embracing, 370-page interpretative guide to South-west Tasmania, incorporating high quality colour plates and detailed text into a portable (but not quite pocket-sized) book. Having an artist's eye for detail, a seemingly insatiable curiosity and a journalist's ability to explain complex phenomena in an accessible way, Ken Collins succeeds where many others have failed.

The first half of the book covers in great detail the geological evolution of the landscape, Aboriginal and European history, and the vegetation and animal life. Here, Collins excels. Where most other guidebooks give only a rough sketch of the environment through which the traveller passes, he provides a detailed yet readable interpretation of the landscape.

The first hundred pages cover the major geological eras which created the buckled landscape of South-west Tasmania, and the periods of glaciation that reshaped it. The liberal use of detailed maps and colour photographs to illustrate geological features and phenomena helps to make the information readily understandable. The many colour plates the size of postage stamps,

whilst useful, have a claustrophobic effect for those used to either the great outdoors or to 'coffee-table' books. However, it is refreshing to see that someone has at last taken on the challenge of explaining geological processes which occurred over time-scales that put our tiny life-spans into perspective.

In the next hundred pages or so, Collins deals with the vegetation and wildlife of the South-west. Where many would ignore the numerous forest fungi, spiders or seashore inhabitants, Collins explains them in detail with accompanying colour plates. One can sense his fascination and his desire to explain to others the mysteries he has encountered. A useful bibliography and glossary complement the text.

The final section consists of a visitor's guide, mainly to multi-day walks such as the South Coast and Port Davey Tracks and Frenchmans Cap, which are for experienced walkers. The sections on Hartz Mountains and Mt Field are the only ones likely to appeal to day trippers. Many of the walks have been covered in other guidebooks, though not with the interpretative eye of a Ken Collins.

Some of these tracks have had much money spent on them to limit degradation and to ensure that the walker's experience is not confined to wading button grass bogs. However, the inclusion of little-used tracks and areas which are likely to attract more visitors as a result is the greatest single failing of the book. By promoting such routes Collins, like John Chapman and others, contributes to the degradation of the environment he wishes to share with his readers.

South-West Tasmania—A Natural History and Visitor's Guide is like an almost pocket-sized encyclopaedia which you can pick up and read when it takes your fancy. However, at \$39.95 and a weighty 370 pages it is the sort of book only a few will poke in their pack pocket and read along the way. Despite its limitations, every South-west enthusiast should read it.

Bob Burton

Mountain Memories—Sixty Years of Skiing by Mick Hull (MH Books, 1990, RRP \$49.50).

I devoured this long-awaited publication almost the moment it arrived on my desk. For, like many other skiers and walkers, I love to read about mountain pioneers, their hardships and their achievements.

Not since the publication of Harry Stephenson's *Skiing the High Plains* back in 1982 has such a collection of mountain stories been compiled in one book. Anyone who enjoyed Stephenson's book will enjoy this one—he was influential in its design and layout.

Mick Hull is especially well qualified to write a book of this kind. He began skiing in 1931 and has remained an enthusiastic walker and skier to this day. He has taken groups of people to many parts of the Victorian Alps—in particular to Mt Hotham, Mt Bogong, and the Bogong High Plains, to which most of the book is devoted. He has also skied in Europe; in 1985, at the age of 75, he won an international giant slalom event for skiers over 70 years of age, held at Innsbruck, Austria.

Printed on high-quality paper, *Mountain Memories* contains over 400 pages of

mountain stories, which date back many years, and is liberally illustrated with photographs—including many of historical interest. Some of these are repetitive: there are more than 300, in black-and-white and in colour. The well-known Mt Bogong tragedy of 1936, in which Hull's skiing friend Cleve Cole died, is perhaps the highlight of the book, and the numerous chapters devoted to it will keep the reader fascinated for hours. Even though *Mountain Memories* is not professionally produced, I found Hull's style of 'bush writing' attractive and fun to read, and I'm sure many others will, too.

Glenn van der Krijff

Kosciusko—Where the Ice-trees Burn by Klaus Hueneker (Tabletop Press, 1990, RRP \$24.95).

The Snowy Mountains of New South Wales is an area worthy of detailed analysis and this most recent effort completes Hueneker's trilogy on it.

His previous books, *Huts of the High Country* and *Kiandra to Kosciusko*, were compiled mostly from stories and snippets of information interspersed with black-and-white photographs. His latest publication, however, consists of a selection of his favourite colour photographs with an introductory text, along similar lines to Harry Nankin's *Range upon Range—The Australian Alps*. Whilst the reproduction and quality of the plates are not as good as those in Nankin's book, *Kosciusko* will nestle nicely on the bookshelf of any Snowy Mountains lover.

Hueneker's text is interesting, to say the least. Reading it, I was almost as excited on a couple of occasions as he obviously had been. His anecdotal approach touches on his personal feelings towards the mountains, and his contact with them on foot and on skis. He has also given us an insight into his photographic technique and equipment. The text leads into a set of more than 80 colour plates.

Hueneker's photography is not restricted to one style; this collection includes wilderness scenes, portraits, and man-made subjects. All are reproduced clearly and sharply, even though they were taken without a tripod.

Kosciusko is a branch in a different direction for Hueneker, and one of which he can be proud.

Gv

The Scientific Significance of the Australian Alps: the Proceedings of the First Fennel Conference edited by Roger Good (Australian Alps National Parks Liaison Committee and Australian Academy of Science, 1990, RRP free).

The Australian Alps are environmentally unique. This book brings together a wide range of scientific perspectives on the Alps. The many topics covered include grazing, Aboriginal pre-history and zoology. Although largely for academic research rather than idle browsing, those seriously interested in the well-being of the Alps will find this book an invaluable resource. Copies are available in limited quantities from the editor, c/- New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service, Queanbeyan—phone (06) 297 6144.

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Lake Mountain Management and Development Plan (Alpine Resorts Commission and Department of Conservation and Environment, 1990, RRP free).

Lake Mountain is the closest alpine area to Melbourne. It is a popular playground for day-tripping ski tourists, whose numbers increase every year. Sheer volume of visitors means that some development, or at least rationalization of existing development, is inevitable: there is too much congestion on trails and around the car-parks. However, there is also a magnificent alpine environment at Lake Mountain (including a unique stand of rain forest) and the paramount consideration in any management decision should be to protect that environment.

The plan sets out proposals for the future management of the area, but the timing for comments has discouraged public participation. Some proposals are good, such as measures to separate skiers and snow-players. But the huge increases in car-parks at high altitudes are ill thought out, unnecessary, and will mean a great deal of destruction of vegetation. There has been no consideration of public transport, nor any attempt to determine the maximum numbers the area can tolerate, with a view to some control of those numbers: Lake Mountain in winter has already reached saturation point.

It is alarming that the Alpine Resorts Commission pressed ahead with the development of a new trail while this plan was being prepared, with the accompanying destruction of rare alpine vegetation. The ARC has the worst environmental record of any land management authority in Victoria (see *Wild* no 38). This plan has some excellent features and would provide for better management of a great ski touring area, but there seems no good policy reason for any continuing involvement on the part of the ARC. Lake Mountain should be made a State Park, as was promised by the Victorian Government some time ago.

The entire plan is on display, and a summary is available free of charge, at Melbourne and regional offices of the Alpine Resorts Commission and the Department of Conservation and Environment.

BW

On the Edge of Wilderness, The Story of Bogong Ski Lodge and Land Resumptions in New South Wales by Bryan Haig (Durham, 1990, RRP \$16.95).

Bogong Lodge stood on private land adjacent to Kosciuszko National Park. The author of this book was its owner until the land was compulsorily acquired for addition to the National Park, and the lodge destroyed.

The real problem with the actions of the National Parks and Wildlife Service was not the resumption of the land: that can often be necessary in order to enhance the viability of the area protected—and this lodge was very close to Mt Jagungal. In a reasoned account, Haig makes clear his feeling of powerlessness in the face of a bureaucracy which refused to hold itself publicly accountable. There were no fair procedures in place which might have allowed public input into the decisions taken, and the land holder received inadequate compensation.

We need better parks, but we also need to get right the process of acquiring them.

BW

People Within a Landscape: A Collection of Images of Nepal photos by Bert Willison, text by Shirley Bourke (Four Sherpa Trust, 1990, RRP \$40).

'I hope you will be able to discover a sensitive reviewer to comment on this book', the final line of the letter that arrived with a copy of *People Within a Landscape* intoned. The implication, no doubt, being that because this book is the work of a charitable trust—and for four Sherpas killed while accompanying a trekking group—it should be reviewed 'gently'. My correspondent should have had more confidence in the book he represented. Although braced for the worst following this introduction, I was immediately captivated by *People Within a Landscape*.

People is a credit to all involved with its publication. Attractively designed and printed to a superior standard, it provides a wonderful insight into the uniquely beautiful life and landscape of Nepal. The excellent photos exude the warmth and colour of these delightful people, and made me resolve to visit Nepal, and sooner rather than later.

The brief text, often in the form of expanded photo captions, deftly sketches a concise but informative overview of the land and its people which admirably complements the pictures. The many trekkers from the West who've been moved by the 'Nepalese experience' will be particularly attracted by this book, but even if, like me, you've never been there, and are suspected of questionable sensitivity, the chances are that you'll find it uplifting.

CB

Australia's Endangered Species edited by Michael Kennedy (Simon & Schuster, 1990, RRP \$39.95).

If you never realized that some Australian species of animals and plants are endangered, you will be shocked by this book and will immediately join at least one of the four conservation groups whose leaders endorse the back cover. But look elsewhere for authoritative enlightenment. The book is aimed at the media and at politicians—who have responded on cue—but even if you are neither, you may want to read it.

The main fault is the wonderfully inventive category termed 'potentially vulnerable', into which are bundled all the species that have ever been rumoured to be rare or declining, whether or not that is the case. For reptiles this has the effect of increasing the number of threatened species from 14 to 155; good for publicity but not very credible. Most of the space in each account is devoted to physical description with pitifully little about the features that make the species interesting or, sometimes, even why they are threatened. How I long for a book that brings endangered species to life and makes them cry out to be saved.

Stephen Garnett

The Living Centre of Australia and The Flowers of Central Australia by Alec Blombery (Kangaroo Press, 1989, RRP \$14.95 and \$8.95, respectively).

The first book is subtitled 'a complete guide to the area'. It isn't. Rather, it is a book on plants contained within a digest of oddly assorted tourist information. The vegetative kernel, complete with photographs and even part of the introduction, reappears in the second book. On its own, the latter is quite useful if you just want a general idea. It includes passable photographs which will assist with the identification of many common desert wild flowers.

SG

The Rights of Nature by Roderick Nash (Primavera and Wilderness Society, 1990, RRP \$24.95).

The ecological needs of the world seem desperately pressing and obvious. It is often said that the time has come for action, not words; the Green movement has a record of action on a wide range of environmental issues. But environmental principles need rigorous theoretical grounding if the Green movement is to achieve the lasting changes in society that our current environmental problems require.

Many philosophical movements have led to social progress some time later: great philosophers of the 19th century, such as the Marxists, the American pragmatists and Freud (to give but three examples) have had enormous influence on what the common person thinks in the 20th century. In fact, much of the theoretical work which influences environmentalists has come from scientists who have been driven by insights derived from their own disciplines to find a wider framework. To date, there has been little philosophical inquiry into environmental matters.

In *The Rights of Nature* (which the Wilderness Society has arranged to be reprinted in Australia after its initial publication in the USA), Nash explores the history of environmental ethics and postulates that there has been an historical process in which rights have been ever more widely applied. They have been extended to the poor, to women, to blacks, to animals, and now must be understood to apply to nature itself. Given that a popular response to nature today is to tame and destroy it, Nash's perspective is timely. I cannot avoid wondering, though, whether the concept of rights is sufficient here. A measuring of rights seems a poor way to interact with any fellow creature. It may assist with legal issues in the short term, but eventually we may need to learn from 'primitive' peoples some of their attitudes towards nature.

BW

Walk the West: Day Walks on Tasmania's West Coast by Duncan How, illustrated by Phil Webb (Tasmanian Department of Sport and Recreation, revised edition, 1990, RRP \$4.95).

This guidebook is well presented with an attractive cover in a handy A5 format. It describes 18 one-day walks on Tasmania's west coast, from easy strolls that can be done in a wheelchair, to more vigorous jaunts of up to seven hours' duration.

Most of the walks described are easily accessible from the well-worn tourist routes and destinations of the west, such as

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Queenstown, Strahan, Zeehan and the Lyell Highway. The book would therefore make a worthwhile acquisition for people planning a standard 'fly-drive' Tasmanian holiday. The walks detailed are all very rewarding and would add an extra dimension to the west coast tourist routine. They visit places like Montezuma Falls, the remains of the historic Abt railway, Donaghys Hill with its spectacular views of Frenchmans Cap, Strahan's ocean beach, the impressive Henty sand dunes, and many relics of past mining activities.

For each walk, the starting point, distance, walking time, map reference and grading are given. Because many of the walks are perfectly straightforward, much of the text is devoted to notes on the interesting historical and botanical backgrounds of the areas. Sketch maps are not provided.

The book contains some rudimentary notes on safety and environmental responsibility, but refers the reader to other, more detailed, sources of information. In summary, it is recommended for tourists or people wanting to become very familiar with the west coast of Tasmania. However, the 'serious' bushwalker who wants information on some of the west's more challenging trips should look elsewhere.

Geoff Law

Garmon Ranges National Park and Arkaroola Sanctuary—A Walking Guide to the Northern Flinders Ranges by Adrian Heard (State Publishing South Australia, 1990, RRP \$14.95).

The Garmon Ranges are South Australia's most hallowed high country: a sublime wilderness of gorges and plateaux. Some diehards will doubtless rue the publication of this, the first walking guide to the area, for the book's very success in giving clear and detailed track notes can also be construed as making accessible a landscape perhaps better left unadvertised.

Such misgivings aside, this guide will be welcomed by many walkers making forays into the area. It includes a brief introduction to the history, geology, flora and fauna of the park, together with tips on access, gear and the like. This information and the precise route descriptions reflect the thoroughness of the author's research and the advice local legends such as Ray Sinclair-Wood have given him.

The guide divides the Gammons into three circuits: the gorges that cut deep into the southern flanks of the Blue Range; Mainwater Pound and the scrubby tops of the Blue Range; and the Mt McKinlay massif. These circuits take in the main features, but one has only to look at the number of side trips and short-cuts offered to appreciate that the terrain resists being packaged too neatly. Perhaps inevitably, the maps of the circuits are dense with contours, and give only a rudimentary outline of the routes to be followed.

Later pages refer to the Arkaroola Sanctuary. Walking notes include highlights such as Mt Painter, the Armchair and Freeling Heights, but the coverage of Yundamutana Gorge and the country further north is far from comprehensive.

The guide contains many cautions about venturing into these parts: the snaring undergrowth and treacherous terrain, the

need to 'tread lightly', and most of all the capricious nature of the water supply. Yet I was surprised to see no real discussion of the pleasures and perils of walking there during flooding rains. My honeymoon, for example, was made even more memorable by a night-long downpour which transformed the gorges into a jewelled spectacle of cascades and waterfalls.

Quentin Chester

The South End—Car Tours & Walks. Kosciuszko National Park (New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service, 1990, RRP \$3.00).

This 42-page booklet appears to be one of a series that deals with various parts of Kosciuszko National Park. The area covered is that contained within the southern half of the park, in particular the region accessible from the roads to Kosciuszko and Guthega and the Alpine and Barry Ways. It is meant as a tourist guide for those unfamiliar with the area, but also contains 18 references for further reading and would provide a good starting point for those wishing to increase their knowledge of this important alpine National Park.

The booklet begins with brief descriptions of both Aboriginal and European history of the region, its vegetation, wildlife and geology. It then discusses the three wilderness areas in this part of the park (Pilot, Byadbo and Jagungal) and the alpine resorts. The alpine area of the Main Range has been excluded; it is covered in a separate publication. The booklet then outlines some of the recreational activities available, such as bushwalking, ski touring, horse-riding and cycling. The regulations that govern these activities are mentioned.

The last and largest part of the booklet describes the roads and tracks of the region. It is based on the main access roads mentioned above and goes into interesting detail on the origins of the names given to features such as creeks and gaps. Throughout the book are numerous line-drawings of the flora and fauna.

David Noble

Canoeing Guide to New South Wales (New South Wales Canoe Association Incorporated, 1990, RRP \$24.95).

This relatively slim publication has been compiled on a voluntary basis by members of the Touring Committee of the New South Wales Canoe Association, and contains contributions from numerous experienced NSW canoeists. It replaces the less thorough guide prepared by the association some 15 years ago and complements the book *Canoeing the Rivers and Lakes of New South Wales* by Chris and Yvonne McLaughlin, which I reviewed in *Wild* no 24.

The advent of virtually indestructible plastic kayaks, a dramatic rise in the general level of skill and an increase in the number of canoeists has led to the 'discovery' of rivers once considered uncanoeable. Consequently the guide includes a number of rivers, or sections of rivers, which have not been previously described.

This is a glossy publication with hundreds of excellent colour photographs to accompany its river descriptions. The introductory section

gives a brief list of safety equipment and other canoeing references, and a description of the international rapid-grading system complete with photographs of typical rapids in each grade. There is also a classification of paddlers from beginner to advanced. The introduction includes a brief but important section on conservation and an explanation of how to use river reports.

About 15 pages are devoted to flat-water paddling: around Sydney Harbour, the northern beaches, Pittwater, the Hawkesbury and Georges Rivers, Port Hacking, the Shoalhaven area and Myall Lakes. The section on white water is divided into six regions: Sydney and environs; central west; south coast and adjacent ranges; southern tablelands and south-west slopes; Hunter and mid-north coast; and northern tablelands and northern rivers. There is an index at the back of the book with an alphabetical list of rivers; page numbers printed in the regional index in the front of the book as well would have been useful.

A publication which covers more than 70 rivers is necessarily brief in describing any one of them. The duration and degree of difficulty of each trip are described, as are access, overall character of the river and the relevant maps. Warning notes are given where appropriate. The guide will help paddlers who plan a trip to decide whether they should tackle each section of their chosen river. A number of sketch maps, drawn from 1:100,000 topographical maps, show access points, major rapids, campsites and tracks appropriate to some rivers. As with bushwalking guides, however, detailed maps of more isolated regions are a necessity. The notes on rapids, whilst useful, are no substitute for a proper inspection.

This is a good publication, and worth buying for the photos alone. It is an essential addition to the library of any paddler planning a white-water tour in New South Wales. The NSW Canoe Association is to be congratulated upon its publication.

James Sloan

The Rivers and Lakes of New South Wales—A Canoeing and Camping Guide by Chris and Yvonne McLaughlin (Macstyle Publishing, 1990, RRP \$16.95).

New South Wales has many excellent and diverse waterways, from the raging waters of the Gwydir to the quiet, flooded red gum forests of Barmah. This book describes 71 of the State's rivers and 62 lakes and is a must for anyone who wishes to explore them by canoe, be they white-water fanatic or laid-back summer paddler.

This is a completely revised and updated edition of the very successful *Canoeing the Rivers and Lakes of New South Wales* by the same authors, first published in 1986. However, it not only updates existing information but includes material on 21 rivers and 26 lakes not documented before. It includes general information on paddling equipment, safety, and first aid; these sections are by no means exhaustive but are more than adequate for a paddling guide. The strength of the book lies in what follows—a description of the rivers and lakes, divided into 16 geographical areas.

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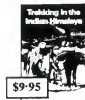
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Having recently visited a number of our most famous National Parks, including Uluru-Mt Olga, Kings Canyon, Kakadu and Purnululu, I am very disappointed and concerned about the detrimental effect that the large number of scenic flights over these areas have on the wilderness experience.

In excess of 50 planes and helicopters fly over some of these areas every day. Around sunrise and sunset there is often a continuous drone of engine noise for an hour or more over the most spectacular parts of these parks. For example, in Picaninni Gorge in Purnululu National Park (Bungle Bungles), which requires a respectable 35 kilometre walking effort to visit, the experience is severely marred by a sightseeing helicopter passing overhead at around 100 metres altitude at least 15 times a day. As it does so, the canyon reverberates with the whine and clatter of the helicopter. In addition, numerous fixed-wing planes pass over the area every day...

National Parks are created (or should be) not only to protect the environment but, equally important, to provide the public with much needed 'breathing space' in which nature can be enjoyed in as unspoilt a condition as possible. There is little sense in establishing National Parks if we lose sight of these objectives. It seems to me that it is high time we reflected on the trend over the past decade or so of subjecting our wilderness areas to ever increasing development and use of technology. Doing this detracts from, and often destroys, the very experience of the wilderness we seek. Apart from the indiscriminate use of planes and helicopters, examples of this are ever increasing vehicle access and the widespread use of power generators and chain-saws in our National Parks. If we do not bring this trend to an end, our wilderness areas will end up as little more than museum display pieces only to be seen in total comfort through a windscreen.

While this may seem a profitable prospect to tourism promoters and tour operators, the individuals who are prepared to put in a personal effort in seeking the wilderness experience...are losing out, being dominated and subjugated by commercial interests. In the long run, society too will lose as our individuality and spirit of adventure and endeavour are suppressed.

I urge you to work towards bringing to an end the increasing development and commercialization of National Parks and other wilderness areas. One significant step would be a strict regulation of non-essential flying over these areas.

Niels Crosley Munksgaard
Wanguri, NT

*Readers' letters are welcome (with sender's full name and address, for verification). A selection will be published in this column. Letters of less than 200 words are more likely to be printed. Write to the Editor, Wild, PO Box 415, Prahran, Victoria 3181.



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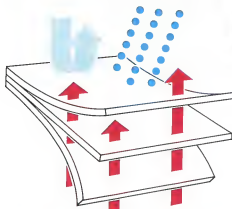
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Michael Colles wearing Paddy Pailin water jacket in Khumbu region. Photo: Michael Colles collection

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Wier Line wearing Wilderness Equipment suit. Camp 1 (5,480 m) after summit attempt on Garulste. Photo: Wil Steffen

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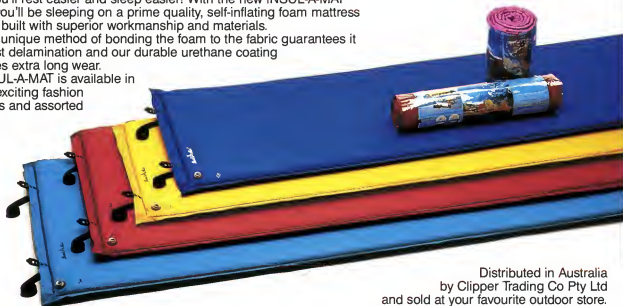


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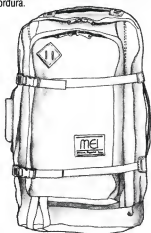
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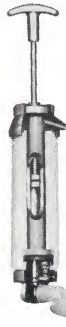
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A full-page photograph of a hiker in a red jacket and backpack standing on a large, dark rock formation. The hiker is looking out over a vast, snow-covered mountain range under a clear blue sky. The snow is unevenly distributed, creating a textured, white landscape.

The spring thaw at Blue Lake, Kosciusko National Park, NSW. Photo, Glenn Tempest

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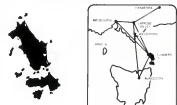
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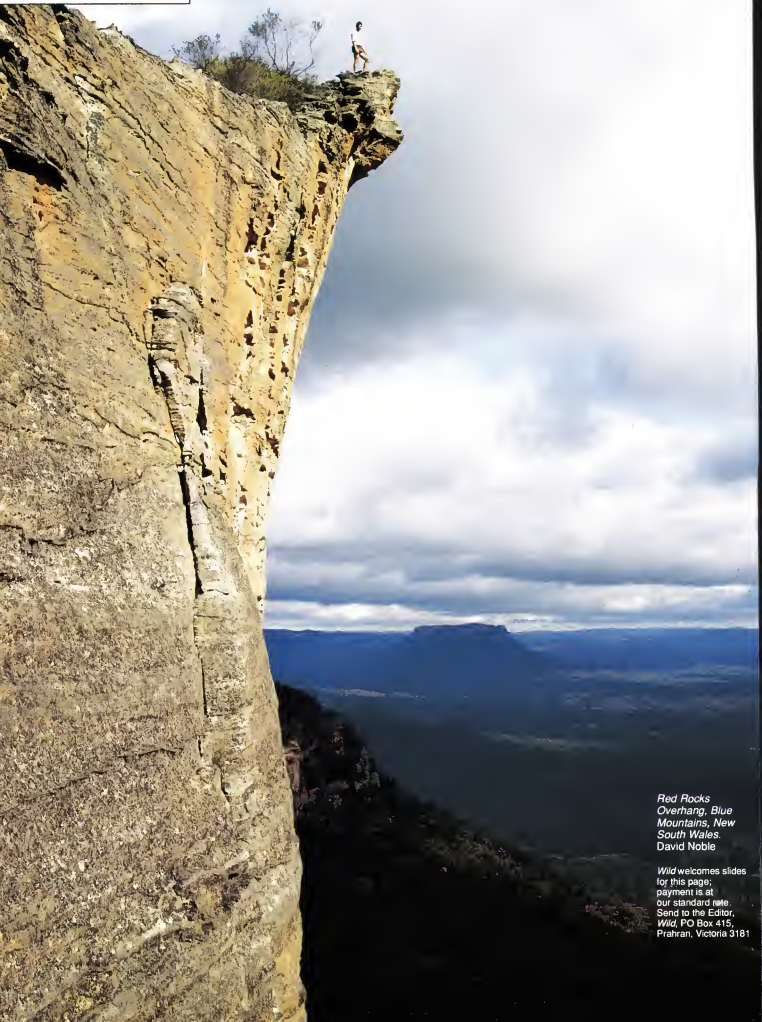
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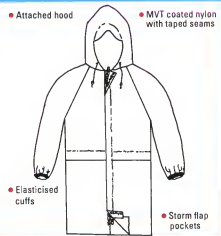
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BEST DRESSED FIRST UP, YET AGAIN

On 20 August at 8pm, Greg Mortimer and Greg Child became the first Australians to summit K2. At 28,250 ft and not climbed since 1986, it is considered to be technically more difficult than Everest. The party used no bottled oxygen, and theirs was the third only ascent of the North Ridge in China. The climb was achieved after spending 41 days in preparation for the summit push, of four days ascent and two days descent. Both climbers continued their long association with Mountain Designs by choosing Mountain Designs sleeping bags and clothing for the climb. Congratulations, team!



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Greg Child on the North Ridge of K2 with the K2 Glacier in background.
Photo: Greg Mortimer